international film review

INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION
of the International Catholic Cinema Office (O. C. I. C.)
12, rue de l'Orme, Bruxelles 4, Belgium.
Edited in three languages : English, French, Spanish.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Jean BERNARD (President of O. C. I. C.); John A.-V. BURKE (Great Britain); Leo LUNDERS (Belgium); Pierre GRÉGOIRE (Luxembourg); Charles REINERT (Switzerland).

GENERAL SECRETARY

André RUSZKOWSKI. 4, rue Martin de Thézillat, NEUILLY-sur-Seine, France.

PERMANENT EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENTS

R. ALAMO, Film Critic (Caracas, Venezuela); J. A. V. BURKE, Director, «*Focus*» (London, Great Britain); J. M. CANO, Film Critic, «*Ecclesia*» (Madrid, Spain); Mathilde Perez Palacio CARRANZA, Head of School for journalism (Lima, Peru); J. P. CHARTIER, Cineaste, Film Critic, «*La Vie Intellectuelle*» (Paris, France); J. F. COELHO, Film Critic, «*Jornal do Comercio*» (Rio de Janeiro, Brasil); M. ERTENSORO, Art Critic, «*Últimas Noticias*» (La Paz, Bolivia); D. FABBRI, Script-writer, Artistic adviser to «*Ente dello Spettacolo*» (Rome, Italy); J. FORTUIN, Film Editor, «*Maasbode*» (Rotterdam, Holland); P. FRANZIDIS (Alexandria, Egypt); J. GIRALDEAU, film critic (Montreal, Canada); J. MORALES GOMEZ, Film Critic «*Semanario Católico*» (La Habana, Cuba); P. GRÉGOIRE, Deputy, Film Editor, «*Luxemburger Wort*» (Luxembourg, Grand-Duchy); J. LOPEZ HENAO, correspondent, «*Noticias Católicas*» (Medellin, Columbia); A. KOCHS, Director, «*Bild- und Filmarbeit*» (Cologne, Germany); V. LEAL, Editor, «*Radio-Renascenca*» (Lisbon, Portugal); L. LUNDERS, Director, «*Docip*» (Brussels, Belgium); A. MARTINEZ (Asunción, Paraguay); I. K. MENON, Secretary to «*The Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association*» (Bombay); W. H. MOORING, Editor, «*The Tidings*» (Los Angeles, USA); L. O'LAOGHAIRE, Journalist, film editor (Dublin, Eire); J. ORSINI, Director, «*Ciné-Sélection*» (Saigon, Indo-China); J. POTENZE, Art Critic, «*Criterio*» (Buenos-Aires, Argentina); T. M. PRYOR, Movie critic, «*The New York Times*» (New York, USA); B. RASMUSSEN, Film Editor (Copenhagen, Denmark); P. REGNOLI, Film Critic, «*Osservatore Romano*» (Vatican City); Ch. REINERT, Director, «*Filmberater*» (Zürich, Switzerland); M. RIVAS DEL CANTO, Director, Morality Council (Santiago de Chile, Chile); Fr. ROJAS DE LA TORRE, lawyer (Mexico City, Mexico); K. RUDOLF, Director, «*Katholische Filmkommission*» (Vienna, Austria); J. L. TALLENAY, chief of staff of «*Radio-Cinéma*» (Paris); V. W TURNER, Hon. Org. Manager, Film Division, C. F. J. V. (Johannesburg, South African Union); J. URARTE, Director, «*Prensa Católica*» (Quito, Equador); R. OREIRO VAZQUEZ, Member of the Film Commission, Catholic Action (Montevideo, Uruguay).

RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSLATIONS

English version : J. A. V. BURKE; French version : J. P. CHARTIER; Spanish version : Ignacio de AGUIRRE.

PRINTERS

IMPRIMERIE ST. PAUL, SA., Rue Jean Origer 6—8, Luxembourg, Grand Duchy.

PUBLICITY MANAGER

Claude MICHEL, 28, rue Marbeau, Paris 16e, France.

ADMINISTRATION

Central Office: Yvonne de HEMPTINNE, General Secretary, O. C. I. C., 12, rue de l'Orme, Bruxelles (Belgium); Tel. 34-81-50. Accounts payable to : CCP Luxembourg, No 140-87; Bank : Banque Internationale à Luxembourg, Account No 5250.

National Representatives

AFRICA (Union of South Africa) : Film Division of the Catholic Federation of the Johannesburg Vicariate P. O. B. 3188 Johannesburg; ARGENTINA: Dr. Rojo Cárdenas, Gen. Secr. C. I. N. E., Av. Alvear 1402, Buenos Aires; AUSTRALIA : Catholic Film Centre, Box 380, Sydney; BELGIUM: C. C. A. C., 10, rue de l'Orme, Bruxelles 4, CCP 7563.72; BRAZIL: Dep. Cinema y Teatro, Acâo Catolica Brasileira, Rua México 11, 16-o and., Rio de Janeiro; CANADA: *French edition:* Service des abonnements Benoît Baril, 4234, rue De Laroche, Montreal 34, Que.; *English edition:* Canadian Film Institute, University of Ottawa, 1, Stewart street, Ottawa; CEYLON: b. e. r. Pieries no 9/6 Arethusa Lane, Wellawatte, Colombo 6; CHILE: Editorial Difusión, S. A. Calle Teatinos 556, Santiago di Chile; EGYPT: C. C. E. C. 9, rue de l'Hôpital Indigène, Alexandria; EIRE: S. O'SULLIVAN, 29, Dame Street, Dublin; FRANCE : Centre du Livre Français, 1, rue de la Visitation, Paris 7-e, CCP Paris, 5662.09; GREAT BRITAIN: The Manager, International Film Review, 20, Ovington Square, London S. W. 3; HOLLAND: Katholieke Filmaktie, Sarphatistraat 76 hs. Amsterdam II; ITALY: Centro Cattolico Cinematografico, Via della Conciliazione 10, Rome, and C. I. P., Via Castelfidardo 47, Rome; LUXEMBOURG: Revue Internationale du Cinéma, 6, rue Jean Origer, Luxembourg, C. C. P. 14087; MALTA: Film Section, Catholic Institute, Palazzo Carafa, Valletta; MEXICO: Legion Mexicana de Decencia, Apartado 1060, México, D. F.; PARAGUAY: Alberto Martinez, Banco de Paraguay, Asunción; SPAIN: Confederación Católica Nacional de Padres de Familia, Manuel Silvela, 9, Madrid; SWITZERLAND: «Der Filmberater», 13, Auf der Mauer, Zürich 1, Postscheck VIII 38057 Dr. Ch. Reinert, Zürich; UNITED STATES : Catechetical Guild, 147 East, 5th St., St. Paul, Minnesota; URUGUAY: J. A. Corlazzoli, Cisplatina 1246 bis, Montevideo.

For all *countries not mentioned*, address inquiries to the Catholic national cinema office or to the Central Office at Brussels.

Yearly Subscription Rates (4 issues)

Great Britain, Ireland and the Dominions: £ 1. (single copies, 5/-); U. S. A., Canada: 4 Dollars (single copies, 1 Dol.); Switzerland: 15 Frs. (single copies, 4 Frs.); «Benelux» Countries: 150 Belgium Frs. (single copies, 40 B. Frs.); France: 900 French Frs. (single copies, 250 F. Frs.). For all other countries, a price has been arranged by agreement between the National representative for the country concerned and the Central Office.

CONTENTS

WHERE STANDS THE CINEMA NOW? ..... * * * 1

✳ A DOCUMENT: Fragments from "Carmelite Conversations" ..... *Georges Bernanos* 3

THE "PHOTO" OF OUR LORD ..... *Vitaliano Rovigatti* 5

BIBLICAL FILMS FROM LUMIÈRE TO GANCE:
I. *Religious themes in the scenarios of the last fifty years* ..... *Mylé* 6
II. *The Christian influence in the history of the Italian silent films* ..... *Roberto Paolella* 8

IMPACT OF THE CINEMA ON SPIRITUAL LIFE ..... *Daniel-Rops* 12

Iconography:
HOLY FACES AND ACTORS ..... * * * 14

"DON BOSCO" MUST LIVE AGAIN ON THE SCREEN ..... *Gilbert Dupé* 15

SANCTITY ON THE SCREEN ..... *Jacques Mervil* 16

SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE CINEMATOGRAPHER ..... *Emmanuel Flipo* 17

✳ *A DOCUMENT:* Part of the original scenario "The Laugh" (Homage to Bergson) ..... *Maurice Bessy and Lo Duca* 20

CINEMA AND PSYCHOLOGY ..... *Agostino Gemelli* 23

SACRED ART ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW LIFE ..... * * * 28

RULES FOR THE FILM CRITIC ..... *Michel de Saint-Pierre* 30

FILM PRODUCTION: THE ESSENTIAL PRELIMINARIES ..... *Lo Duca* 33

THE CINEMA AND THE PUBLIC ..... *Georges Charensol* 36

MECHANICS OF A FILM'S SUCCESS ..... *I. S. O. P.* 37

DECALOGUE OF THE ARTIST ..... *Gabriela Mistral* 38

TELEVISION: The filmmakers' newest and perhaps greatest opportunity .. *Don L. Kearney* 39

"...WHERE THE SPIRIT BREATHES..." ..... *Pierre Leprohon* 41

Youth and the cinema: THE GREATNESS AND FRUSTRATION OF THE FILM PROFESSION ..... *Marcel Huret* 45

IN ORDER TO BECOME THE BEST ..... *Jean Chataigner* 47

BEYOND PICTURES ..... *J. G. Auriol* † 48

THE ESSENTIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FILM AND TEACHING .. *Guido Gonella* 50

This special Holy Year number is due to the efforts of Lo Duca

FILMS :
4 FAUB. MONTMARTRE
PARIS TÉL. PROV. 33.75
FELIX LACROIX
Don Bosco
Un Film International
SCÉNARIO DE J. DE LA VARENDE & GILBERT DUPÉ.

✳ *A DOCUMENT:* Part of a catechistic scenario: "WHO IS GOD? — GOD IS A PURE SPIRIT" ..... *Diego Fabbri, Mario Soldati, Cesare Zavattini* 52

WORLD PANORAMA

✳ LETTER FROM HIS EXC. MGR J. B. MONTINI 54

AFRICA :
* *African Cinema: Dream or reality?* ..... Pierre Albin Martel 54
Cameo-cinema in Algeria ..... P. Murati 56
Arab cinema ..... M.-R. Bataille 58
Egypt (Film activities) ..... R. P. Franzidis 60
Ethiopia 60
Tangier 61

AMERICA :
Panorama of the cinema in Uruguay ..... J. C. Ponce de León 61
C. Rauschert Chiarino, P. B. Gutiérrez 62

No 6. THE AMERICAN CINEMA

ASIA :
"*Gnana Soundari*" ..... T. Purakel, S. J. 64
* *The Indian film industry* ..... Miss Pannah Shah, PH. D. 64
Letters from Japan
I. *The Japanese Cinema* ..... Tatsuo Saito 66
II. *A moral code* ..... Kikou Yamata 67

EUROPE :
Belgium: National production ..... Léo Lunders 68
Germany: The recovery of truth ..... Cat Borg 68
A film producing firm versus the Catholic "Filmdienst" .... Erich Raudisch 69
France: From "La Beauté du Diable" to "La Marie du Port" .... * * * 71
A forgotten pionneer: Cardinal Dubois ..... Ch. Ford 71
Great Britain: Graham Greene - Film critic ..... * * * 72
Irish Cinema roundabout ..... Brendan O'Shea 72
Italy: They are filming "Saint Francis" ..... * * * 74
Portuguese activities ..... V. Leal 75
Spain: An auxiliary film bureau ..... * * * 76
* *PRESENT STATE OF SWEDISH CINEMA* ..... Alfred Adler 77
A film intended to contribute to Christian Unity: "VATICAN" ..... Hans Nieter O'Leary 81

ANALYTICAL INDEX OF THE 1st YEAR

LES LABORATOIRES CINÉMATOGRAPHIQUES DE CLICHY

25-27, Rue Vassou — Clichy — Per. 30-20, 21

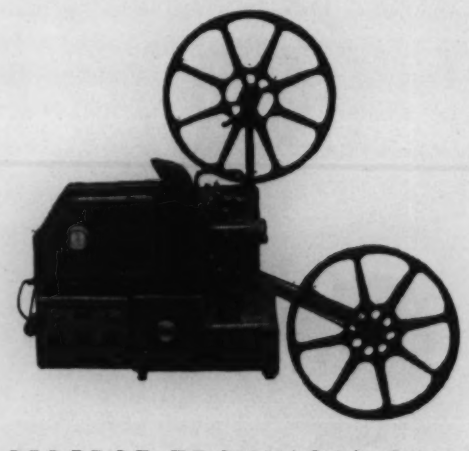
HIGH-GRADE CINEMATOGRAPHIC WORK FOR 16 mm. FILM

Development of 16 mm. negatives, pictures and sound - Printing of copies and inverse negatives - All kinds of editing work - Films treated - Films reduced: 35 to 16 and 35 to 8 - Recordings duplicated - Mixing

AT THE **OFFICE GENERAL** DE LA
CINEMATOGRAPHIE FRANÇAISE

you will find

16 mm PROJECTION EQUIPMENT, FOR AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS
TESTIMONIALS FROM EVERY COUNTRY



PERFECT TECHNICAL SKILL

DESIGNED FOR TEACHING
LOWEST PRICES

O. G. C. F. 39, Avenue Victor Hugo Paris XVIe - Pas. 57-14

Ciné-Sièges

45, RUE HENRI BARBUSSE — FLA 01.08

AUBERVILLIERS

The leading French makers of theatre seats

Have equipped

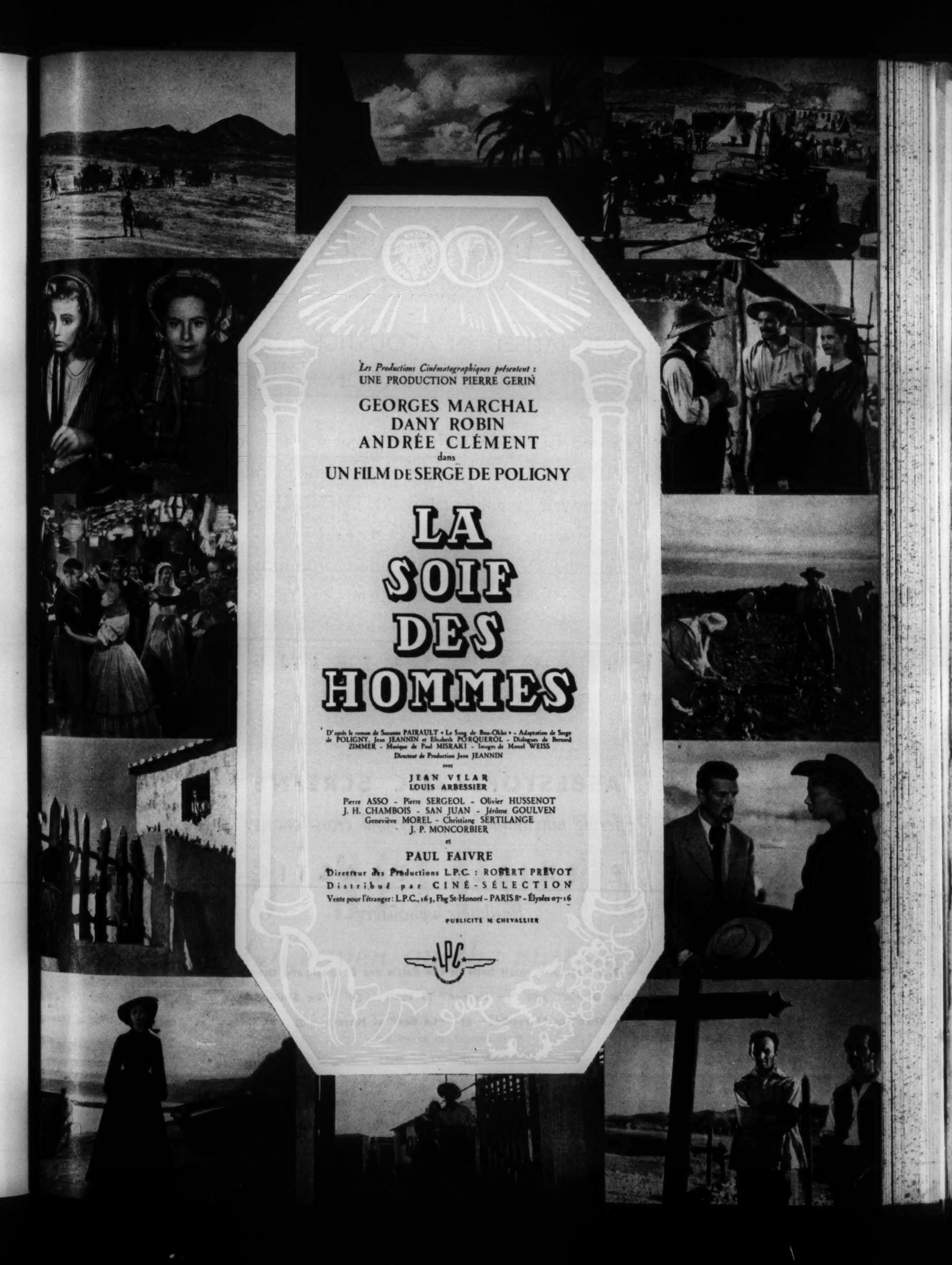
THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS PALACE AT CANNES — THE UNESCO CINEMA ROOM — THE CINEMA ROOM OF THE AMERICAN INFORMATION SERVICE etc.

Offers a full range of seats and folding chairs.
Brings to your notice its latest seating system (under Government guaranteed patent)

pLIDEAL

Adaptable to all types of seat.
Maximum comfort. —
Unprecedented minimum dimensions. —

Ensures a substantial gain in seating accomodation



Les Productions Cinématographiques présentent :

UNE PRODUCTION PIERRE GERIN

GEORGES MARCHAL
DANY ROBIN
ANDRÉE CLÉMENT

dans

UN FILM DE SERGE DE POLIGNY

LA SOIF DES HOMMES

D'après le roman de Suzanne PAIRAULT « Le Sang de Bou-Okba » - Adaptation de Serge de POLIGNY, Jean JEANNIN et Elisabeth PORQUEROL - Dialogues de Bernard ZIMMER - Musique de Paul MISRAKI - Images de Marcel WEISS

Directeur de Production Jean JEANNIN

avec

JEAN VILAR
LOUIS ARBESSIER

Pierre ASSO - Pierre SERGEOL - Olivier HUSSENOT
J. H. CHAMBOIS - SAN JUAN - Jérôme GOULVEN
Geneviève MOREL - Christiane SERTILANGE
J. P. MONCORBIER

et

PAUL FAIVRE

Directeur des Productions L.P.C. : ROBERT PRÉVOT

Distribué par CINÉ-SÉLECTION

Vente pour l'étranger : L.P.C., 163, Fbg St-Honoré - PARIS 8e - Élysées 07-16

PUBLICITÉ M. CHEVALLIER

COME AND CONSULT US !

WITHOUT CHARGE

OUR SERVICES SPECIALISED IN ACOUSTICS
AND DECORATION are at your disposal !

Hang your WALLS and CEILINGS with our patent (s. g. d. g.) ASBESTOS fabrics
RAPID and CLEAN solution, no regulation closing
Approved by public safety AUTHORITIES
- Guaranteed perfect SONORITY -
Splendid DECORATIVE effect, 900 tints
Easy UPKEEP, vacuum cleaner

STAGE CURTAINS

Glass-silk fabric satin finish iridescent
wool velvet

ASBESTOPLASTIC SCREENS

offering maximum luminosity and cross-sonority

FLEXIBLE PLASTIC

brushable upholstery

A few references : **The large and small halls of the Palais des Festivals and the cinema "Le Paris at Cannes ⊡ "Le Gloria" and "Le Helder" in Paris ⊡ "Le Studio", "Le Club", "Le Caméra" and "Le Meilhan" at Marseilles ⊡ "Le Rex" at Nevers ⊡ "L'Odéon" at Angers**

A FILM BY AUGUSTO GENINA

CIELO SULLA PALUDE

(Heaven on the marshes)

inspired by the life of Maria Goretti

For sale abroad :
GERVIAC
6, rue Lincoln - PARIS (8e)
Balzac 15-02

O.C.I.C. Award 1949
Présidence du Conseil Prize
Prize for the best staging
at Venice Biennale 1949

Distributors for France
and North Africa : A. I. C.
25, rue Quentin-Bauchart,
PARIS (8e) Ely 80-21

SOUND PROJECTOR

"DEBRIE 16"

TYPE "M. B. 15"

equipped with incandescent bulb

The quality apparatus

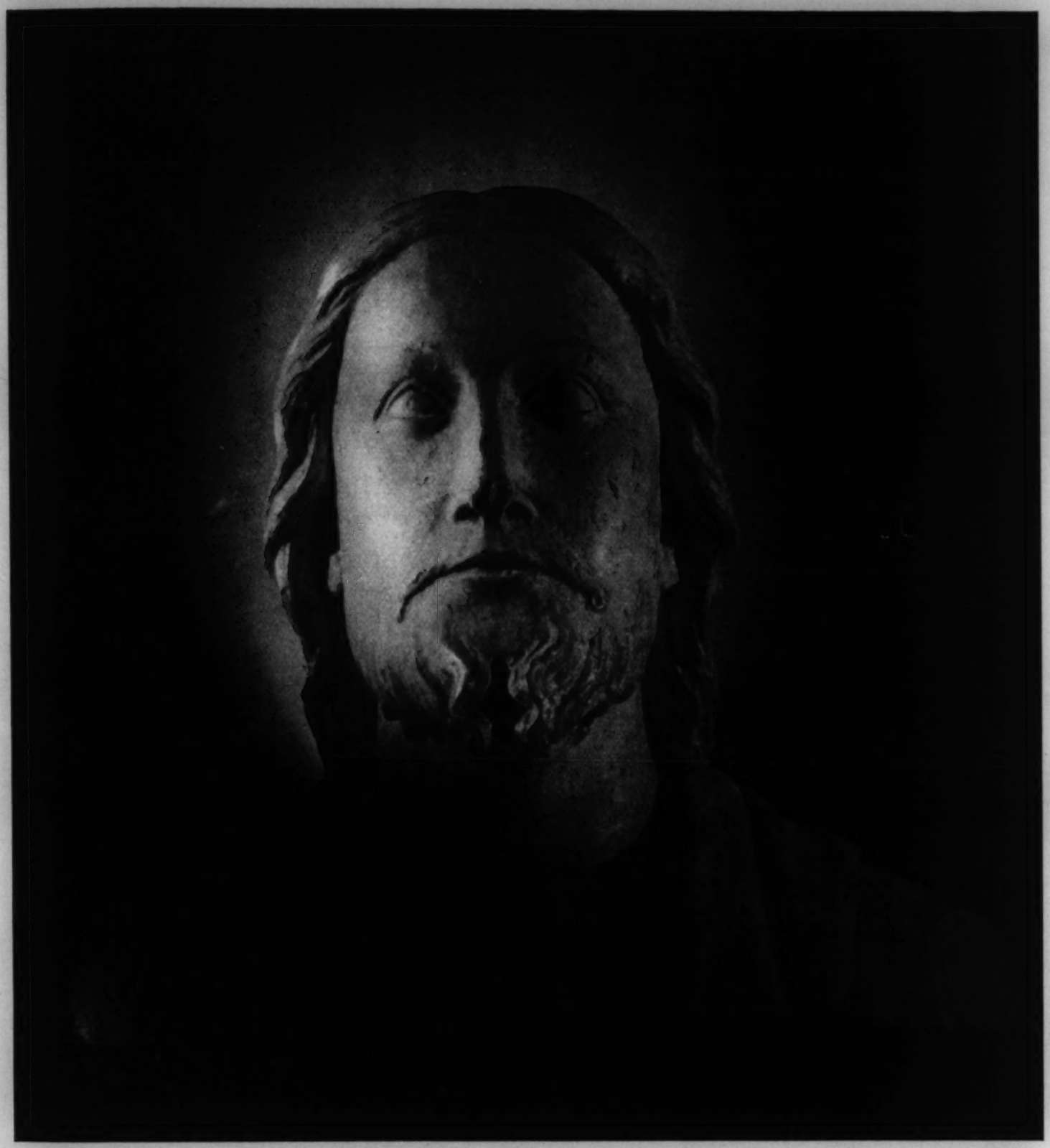
that has proved

its efficiency...

Etablissements André DEBRIE

111-113, Rue St Maur - PARIS XIe

Cinetechnic, Ltd., 169, Oldfield Lane, Greenford (Middlesex), England



THE GOSPEL IN STONE

FOR SALE ABROAD :
"C.A.P.A.C." *PARIS IX^e^* *26, RUE LAFITTE*
PROVENCE 38-22

CINEMA NEEDS FRESH AIR

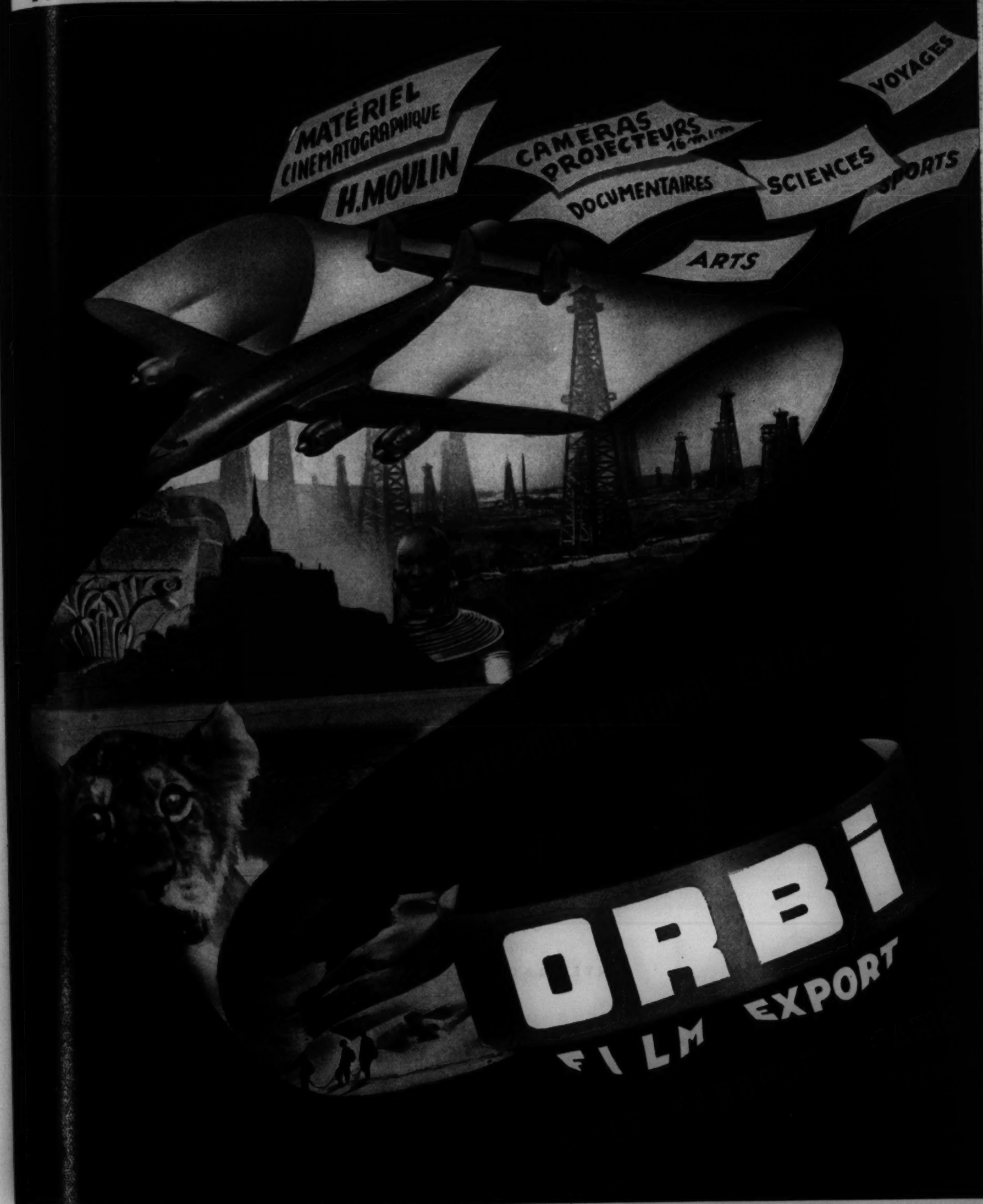
The masses, who today are afflicted — and far more than they appear to be — by the demoralising gloom of the films generally offered to them by the cinema, theatrical performances and literature, expect to find in the entertainment halls they frequent something that will lessen the daily care and anxiety weighing down upon them. To meet these justified expectations, *Ciné-Sélection* has just completed a series of films which, from every point of view, will satisfy the demands of the most exacting of publics :

La Soif des Hommes, a major film of romantic adventure, full of action. A thrilling story of the life of French colonists at the time of the pacification of Algeria, with Georges Marchal, Dany Robin and Andrée Clément. A Serge de Poligny production. ✦ *Véronique*, the celebrated musical comedy by André Messager, with Giselle Pascal, Jean Desailly, Jean Marchat, Marina Hotine, Denis d'Inès, Pierre Bertin, Arthur Devere, Max Dalban, Temerson, Noel Roquevert and Armontel. A Robert Vernay production. ✦ *Jeannot l'intrépide*, the first long French animated cartoon, entirely in Technicolor, based on the characters of Charles Perrault; dialogue by Paul Colline and music by René Cloerec. A Jean Image production. ✦ *La Nuit s'achève*, with the essential part of this dramatic film inspired by the recent scientific discovery: grafting the human eye; with Victor Francen, Ludmila Tcherina, Georges Rollin, Edmond Audran and Gérard Landry. A Pierre Méré production. ✦ *L'Homme qui revient de loin*, a mystery film adapted from a novel by Gaston Leroux, with Annabella, Paul Bernard, Maria Casarès, Henri Cremieux, Daniel Lecourtois, Jacques Servière and Delmont. A Jean Castanier production.

CINE SELECTION

17, RUE MARIGNAN
PARIS 8e.
BAL 29-01

A FIRM AT THE SERVICE OF THE CINEMA



THE CINEMA AT THE SERVICE OF THE MIND

After MONSIEUR VINCENT
DOCTEUR LAËNNEC
LA CAGE AUX FILLES

MAURICE CLOCHE

is to make a film entitled

DE PÈRE INCONNU

(unmarried mothers - illegitimate children)

DERNIER TRAIN DE PEKIN

(Missionaries in China)

a Franco-Italian
co-production
INTERNACIONAL FILMS
et

THE

MIRAMAR PRODUCTIONS

present

for the first time on the screen

THE YOUNG CONDUCTOR

ROBERTO BENZI

beside

PAUL BERNARD

and

DEBUCOURT

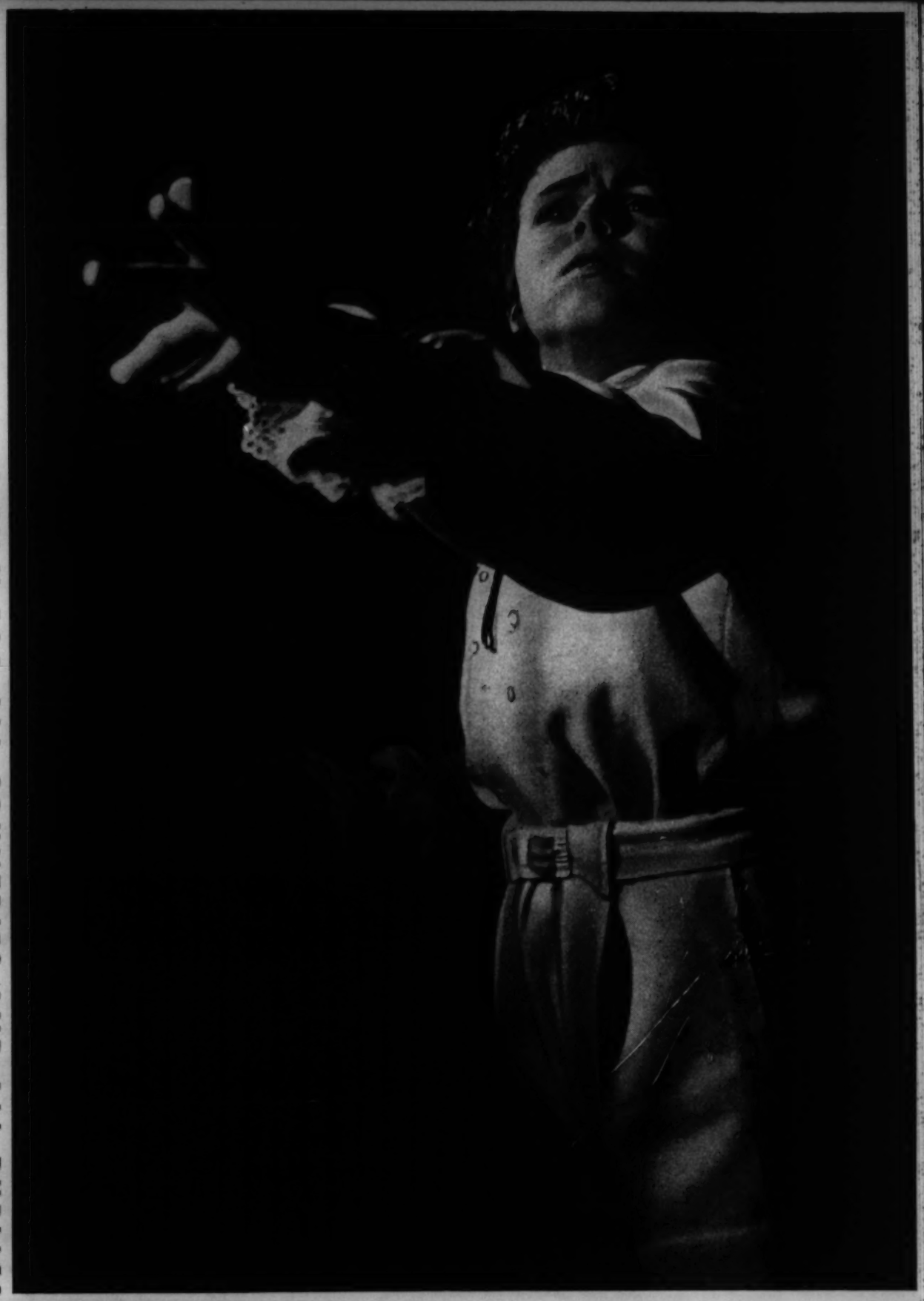
(Sociétaire de la Comédie Française)

in

a realization by

GEORGES LACOMBE

A FILM FOR ALL COUNTRIES AND ALL PUBLICS



PRELUDE A LA GLOIRE

Unanimously chosen for the French Film Week at Cannes

Original scenario by **JEAN BERNARD-LUC** and **PAUL ANDREOTA**

Dialogue by **JEAN BERNARD-LUC**

with **LOUISE CONTE**
Sociétaire de la Comédie Française

ROBERT PIZANI

CHARLES LEMONTIER

Jacques SOMMET - Paul DEMANGE - Raymond HERMANTIER - Edmond ARDISSON
Charles BLAVETTE - La petite Nicole MARÉE

with the Italian actress
FELGA LAURI
and
ANDRÉ LE GALL

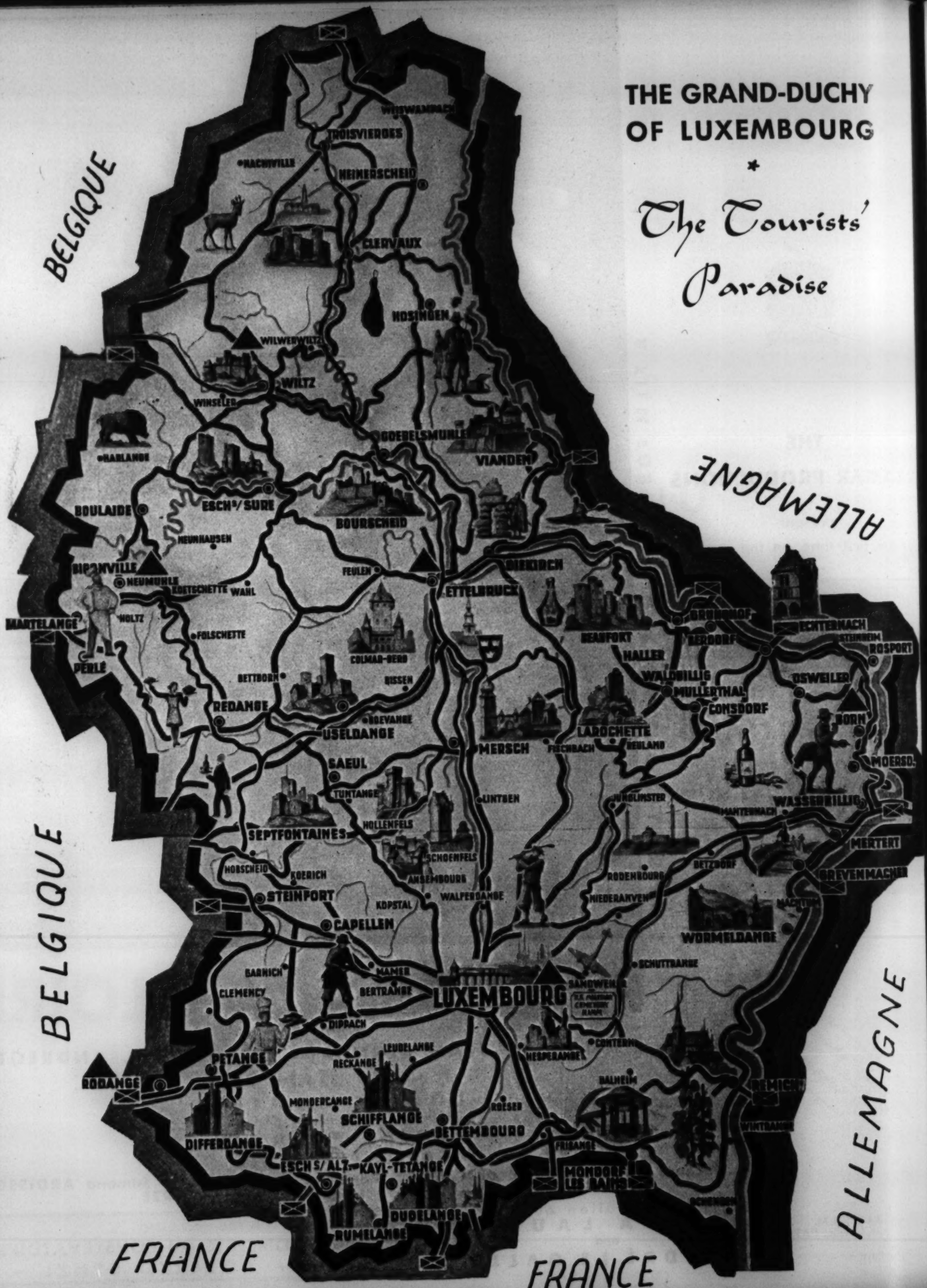
with the orchestra
of Société des **CONCERTS DU CONSERVATOIRE**
Conductor: ROBERTO BENZI

tributors : GRAY FILM
rue Dumond-d'Urville, PARIS-16e
sale abroad :
ue Lincoln, Paris-8e

THE GRAND-DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG

*

The Tourists' Paradise



INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW

NUMBER 5 1950 2nd YEAR

Where stands the cinema now ?

To define the present position of the cinema, both for those who go to Rome and for those who are unable to make a journey ad limina Apostolorum, *is surely a tempting project. The fact that the Holy Year coincides with the fiftieth year of the cinema's effective existence makes the temptation the greater. In this issue we study some of the problems of the Seventh Art, pose others, try to point a possible choice. This is the advantage of every summing up. Our own makes the particular attempt to distinguish between the essential and the anecdotic. To speak plainly, it seems to us essential to take up a well defined position in regard to the cinema. Michael Angelo's dictum: "Good painting is in itself religious" upholds our conviction that we must attain to the fullest development of the language of the cinema before we can turn it to our own ends; we must make and preach good cinema before we can even envisage the advent of (morally) good films.*

The cinema is far from being a philosophy, and still further from being an ethical system. That it is first and foremost an industry is proved by its history; sometimes it contrives to be an art. We must, therefore, eschew arbitrary speculation, which would only convince the already convinced, and go straight to the heart of the problem of film.

Some, filled with praiseworthy and highly edifying intentions, approach the question from a faulty viewpoint: the best of these try to make use of proved and tried weapons whose weakness is that they belong to other spheres, such as literature or the theatre. Preliminary successes can deceive us for a time; but the problem remains untouched and more urgent than ever. The following pages give evidence that after fifty years many enlightened minds still ignore the cinema as an art form and treat is as a machine for recording certain visual beauties which literature cannot describe nor the theatre bring to life.

But this art is powerful only when it is art. Take away art, and the ctnema becomes a low grade diversion, a drug for eye and ear which impairs judgment, inspiration and social conduct.

It is our duty to be exacting in what pertains to the cinema, particulary where religious themes are concerned. We must not give our approbation to films which claim to interpret the Scriptures but lack the artistic and intellectual integrity which we consider essential. We even have to combat certain films which are outwardly religious but whose spirit is a betrayal of the Faith. A badly made religious film is a betrayal, not only because it has nothing to give to the believing audience but more especially because it drives still further from the fold those straying sheep of whom Christ spoke.

More important from our point of view than exegetical films or screen hagiographies are the films which, by their manner of telling a story, posing or solving a problem, convey the idea of a Christian way of life. The rest will follow.

★

The cinema is becoming an ever more powerful witness. It is giving birth to a new mythology. Its heroes are made familiar to men of all kinds and conditions all over the world.

Are we not responsible for the often deplorably low ideals thus offered to the masses? Let no one say that the cinema is merely entertainment. Are not poetry, literature, music, painting sprung from a desire to entertain? To-day's leisure forges to-morrow's civilisation,

If the witness to a truly Christian way of life, multiplied many times, thanks to the cinema, already has the power to contribute towards the moral elevation of the present-day world, what shall be said of the virtually unexplored possibilities of bringing to the screen the phenomena of the interior, spiritual life?

In the atmosphere of Holy Year it has seemed opportune to devote several articles to this aspect of the cinema and to give examples in the form of scenarios whose aim is the translation of certain religious, spiritual and psychological problems into visual terms. Making no claim to perfection, these essays can, nevertheless, serve to guide the research for new laws capable of enriching this language which has become universal in less than half- a century.

May our publication help to convince the élite that it is no longer possible to ignore the cinema as a creative medium, a means of expression and of teaching. Any culture — and particularly religious culture — refusing to lend itself to this means of reaching so many is courting grave danger.

As we go to press another message from the Vatican has reached us. *See letter from His Excellency Mgr J. B. Montini, Substitutus, p. 54.*

GEORGES BERNANOS

FRAGMENTS FROM CARMELITE CONVERSATIONS

Scene VI, Tableau III[1]

PRIORESS.

Peace, peace, my daughters! No boasting. I'm sure that in your homes the girls didn't fare too badly. Your father has bought back all the Lord's estate and the Marquis of Manerville is much worse off than his farmer.

Sister Blanche stands a little apart. A nun moves towards her and exclaims:

SISTER MATHILDA.

Oh, Reverend Mother, Sister Blanche is crying.

Sister Blanche tries to smile as Sister Mathilda leads her back to the group.

SISTER MATHILDA.

We were only joking, Sister Blanche. Our job is sawing firewood; it gives one an appetite.

PRIORESS.

What a frivolous discussion. Does the spirit of the age penetrate everywhere, even through the walls of Carmel ?

SISTER MARTHA.

Here there are neither bourgeois nor aristocrats.

PRIORESS.

Well meant, but foolishly expressed !

SISTER MARTHA.

I beg your pardon, Reverend Mother. I only meant that here we are all sisters. Oughtn't all men to be brothers ? Didn't Baptism make us all equal ?

SISTER VALENTINE OF THE CROSS.

Brothers aren't necessarily always equal, Sister Martha.

---

[1]) *Editions de la Baconnière, Neuchâtel, et Editions du Seuil, Paris, 240 p., in "Les Cahiers du Rhône".*

The "Dialogues des Carmelites" *was written by G. Bernanos in Tunisia during the winter 1947—1948, intended for a film of which the scenario was composed by the Rev. Raymond Bruckberger after the famous story of Gertrud von Le Fort "Die Letzte am Schafott" (The Last on the Scaffold).*

SISTER MARTHA.

That's true.

SISTER ALICE.

But the nobles aren't our elder brothers, Sister Valentine. You know the old saying, «When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman ?»

SISTER VALENTINE OF THE CROSS.

Just a moment, Sister Alice. Adam is supposed to have lived more than a thousand years. We can be pretty sure that before he died he must have picked out from among so many children those who should till the earth and those (much fewer in number) who should guard it from robbers. That's the origin of gentlemen !

SISTER MARTHA.

If sheep gave wool before anyone thought of training dogs to guard them, that's no reproach to sheep or dogs or shepherds.

SISTER ALICE.

Sometimes a dog devours a sheep.

SISTER VALENTINE OF THE CROSS

And if the sheep got rid of the dogs, would they be safer from the wolf ?

SISTER ANNE.

It is true that the nobles can wage war. Ours lost three sons in the King's service, and his father before him was crippled from a musket shot in his back. And the daughter can't marry for lack of a dowry. It's pitiful to see the Count at Mass on Sundays with his shoes all patched.

SISTER ALICE.

I wager he holds up his head none the less.

SISTER MATHILDA.

It would be imprudent to do otherwise these days.

SISTER MARTHA.

Indeed, that's true, Sister Mathilda. We must be fair. My good father is well off although he's just an ordinary villager. But it breaks his heart to see the men who swagger about the streets — drunkards, and idlers notorious for miles around who never get a job except at harvest time.

SISTER VALENTINE OF THE CROSS.

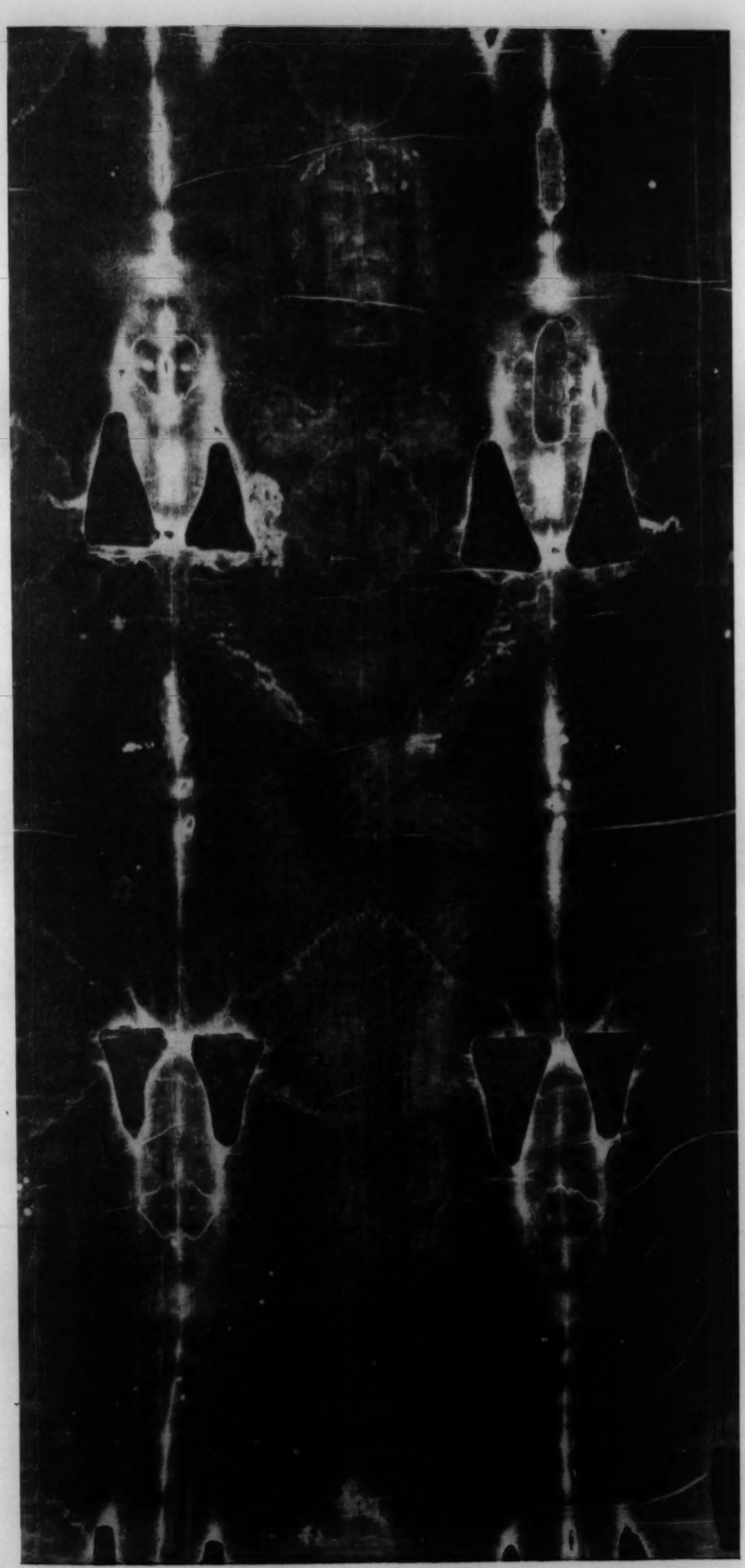
The patriots burnt down nine châteaux in the Beauvoisis alone.

SISTER ALICE.

That may well be, Sister. But remember that times of disturbance are like times of plague or cholera. They bring out the riff-raff everywhere as rain does slugs and snails. Yet some of these patriots are good Christians too. At Verchin I hear they carried the Crucifix in procession to celebrate their victory.

SISTER VALENTINE OF THE CROSS.

After looting the church and knocking the heads off the statues over the porch ...



Cliché Giuseppe Enrie

The Holy Shroud *(Santa Sindone)* the upper part of which is shown in this photographic reproduction (impression corresponding to a negative) is still an "object of mystery, certainly not fashioned by the hand of man"[1]). It was not until 1898 that Me Secondo Pia gave new life to this relic with the aid of photography. This effigy, in itself expressionless and without beauty, needs to be transposed by the photographic negative in order that the admirable portrait may be seen.

We remain aloof from the old discussion between supporters and adversaries of the genuineness of the Turin Shroud, but we cannot adopt an attitude of indifference when photography and the cinema are concerned, for it would seem that the Holy Shroud was conceived several centuries before their invention.

1) Pius XI.

SISTER MARTHA.

That's true.

SISTER ALICE.

But the nobles aren't our elder brothers, Sister Valentine. You know the old saying, «When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman ?»

SISTER VALENTINE OF THE CROSS.

Just a moment, Sister Alice. Adam is supposed to have lived more than a thousand years. We can be pretty sure that before he died he must have picked out from among so many children those who should till the earth and those (much fewer in number) who should guard it from robbers. That's the origin of gentlemen !

SISTER MARTHA.

If sheep gave wool before anyone thought of training dogs to guard them, that's no reproach to sheep or dogs or shepherds.

SISTER ALICE.

Sometimes a dog devours a sheep.

SISTER VALENTINE OF THE CROSS

And if the sheep got rid of the dogs, would they be safer from the wolf ?

SISTER ANNE.

It is true that the nobles can wage war. Ours lost three sons in the King's service, and his father before him was crippled from a musket shot in his back. And the daughter can't marry for lack of a dowry. It's pitiful to see the Count at Mass on Sundays with his shoes all patched.

SISTER ALICE.

I wager he holds up his head none the less.

SISTER MATHILDA.

It would be imprudent to do otherwise these days.

SISTER MARTHA.

Indeed, that's true, Sister Mathilda. We must be fair. My good father is well off although he's just an ordinary villager. But it breaks his heart to see the men who swagger about the streets — drunkards, and idlers notorious for miles around who never get a job except at harvest time.

SISTER VALENTINE OF THE CROSS.

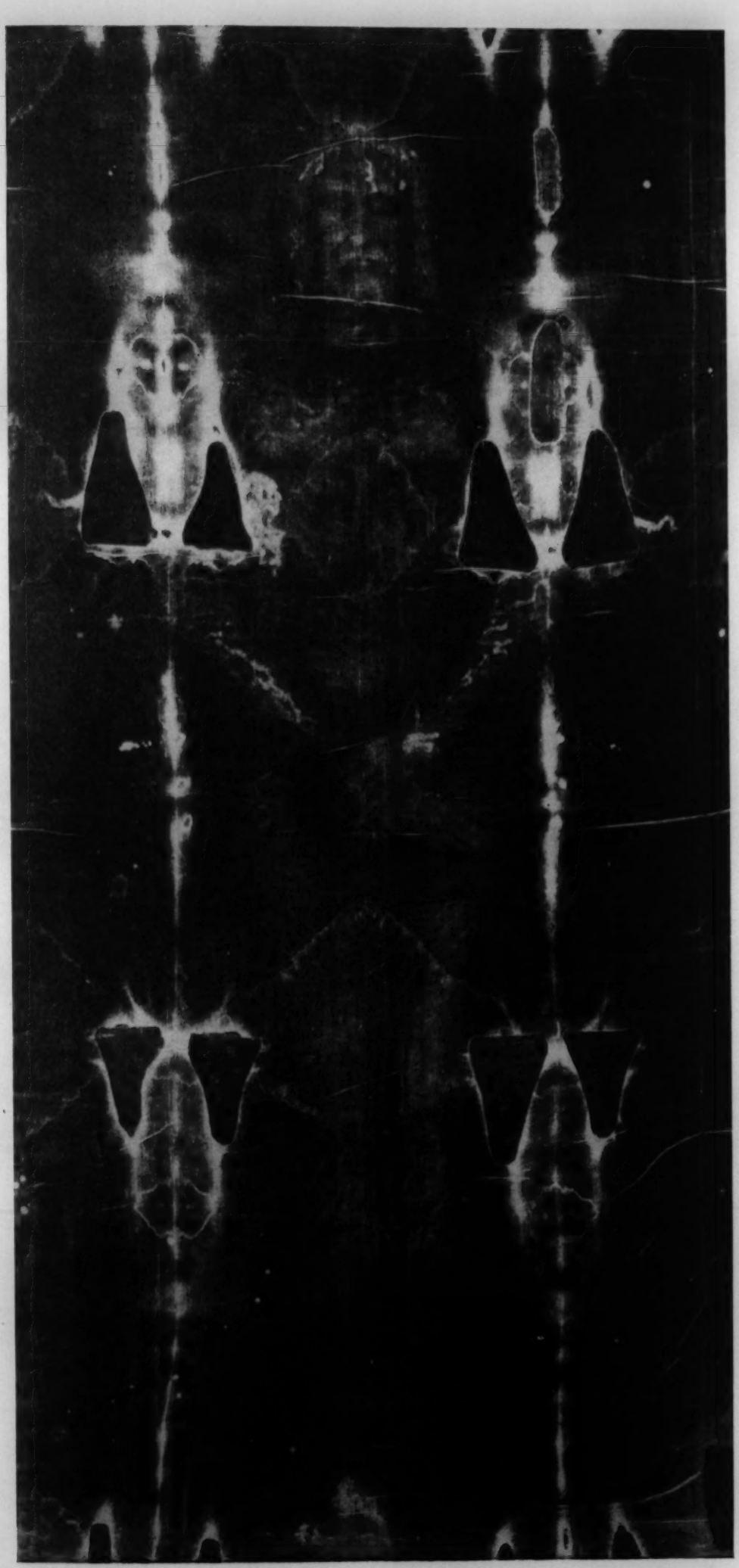
The patriots burnt down nine châteaux in the Beauvoisis alone.

SISTER ALICE.

That may well be, Sister. But remember that times of disturbance are like times of plague or cholera. They bring out the riff-raff everywhere as rain does slugs and snails. Yet some of these patriots are good Christians too. At Verchin I hear they carried the Crucifix in procession to celebrate their victory.

SISTER VALENTINE OF THE CROSS.

After looting the church and knocking the heads off the statues over the porch ...

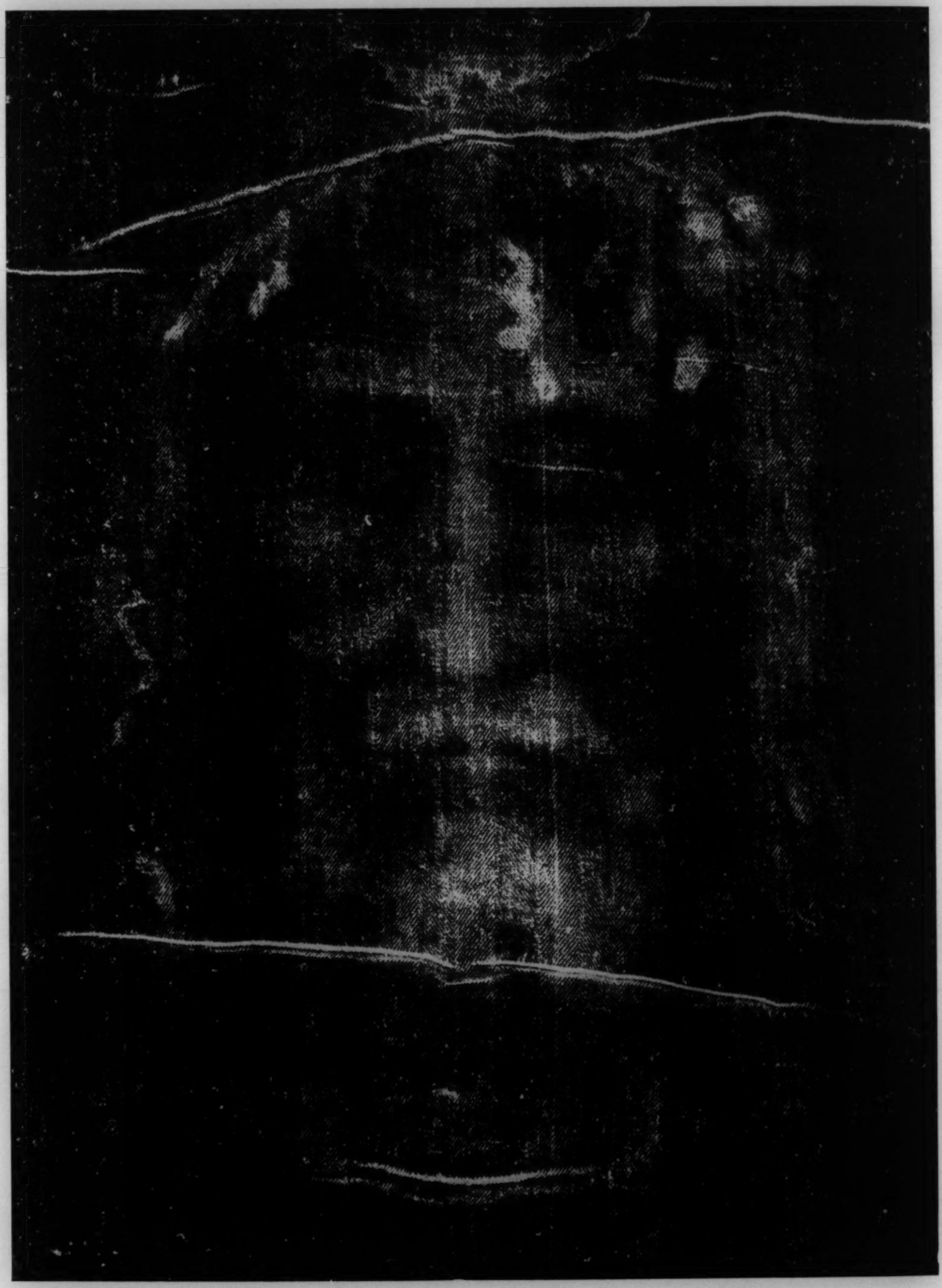


Cliché Giuseppe Enrie

The Holy Shroud *(Santa Sindone)* the upper part of which is shown in this photographic reproduction (impression corresponding to a negative) is still an "object of mystery, certainly not fashioned by the hand of man"[1]). It was not until 1898 that Me Secondo Pia gave new life to this relic with the aid of photography. This effigy, in itself expressionless and without beauty, needs to be transposed by the photographic negative in order that the admirable portrait may be seen.

We remain aloof from the old discussion between supporters and adversaries of the genuineness of the Turin Shroud, but we cannot adopt an attitude of indifference when photography and the cinema are concerned, for it would seem that the Holy Shroud was conceived several centuries before their invention.

1) Pius XI.



This photograph of the Holy Shroud (detail) is as old as the cinema

THE "PHOTO" OF OUR LORD

A film entitled The Photograph of Christ *was recently completed at the "Cinecittà" studios in Rome.* 1)

It is documentary on the Holy Shroud conserved in Turin Cathedral. However impossible it may seem after the passing of twenty centuries, the film indisputably confirms the Gospel writings relating the Passion of Our Lord.

For the first time, the venerable relic was subjected to the lens of the film camera. The event is one of capital significance, for it must be recalled that the jealously guarded Holy Shroud has been publicly exhibited only under very exceptional circumstances: on the occasion of Holy Years or in connection with other specially important celebrations.

Luigi Gedda, doctor and university professor, was the prime mover in this undertaking designed to achieve a twofold purpose: first, scientifically to demonstrate that the Holy Shroud is incontestably the shroud wrapped around the body of Jesus Christ; second, to deduce from this relic further confirmation of the details of the Passion set forth in the Gospel stories. Indeed, Gedda, who devoted several years to the study of the Holy Shroud, declared that it could very well be defined as the Fifth Gospel.

The documentary develops in "lineal" fashion. The evangelical account of the entombment and of the resurrection has already formed the subject of screen commentaries, supported by the presentation of masterpieces of the painter's art (Botticelli, Guerino, Mantegna, Angelico, Clovio, etc,). In this case, the film retraces the history of the Holy Shroud, beginning with several very ancient documents and ending with the present day.

The Holy Shroud is the winding-sheet which, according to tradition, was wrapped around the body of Our Saviour, from the feet, around the head and back over the feet. As a result of the evaporation of the balsams used (myrrh and aloes) the shroud received a double impress of Christ: dorsal and facial, sepia in colour, which despite the intervening centuries and the many journeys made by the relic, are still clearly visible. To the naked eye, however, the two imprints are far from resemble a portrait. There was considerable surprise when the photographic plate used for the reproduction of the shroud was being developed. A negative image was expected and instead of this a positive image appeared. The Holy Shroud would, therefore, be only a "photographic negative" of the face of Jesus Christ. He is the only personage of ancient times whose photograph has come into our possession. 2)

After this amazing and unforeseen discovery, scientists conducted a series of experiments and researches with the object of determining the nature and significance of the details printed on the flaxen sheet; their work made it possible to verify the authenticity of the flagellation, of the crowning with thorns and the piercing of the wrists (not the hands) with nails. It was even possible to measure Christ's height, to identify the nature of the water that flowed from His side and to arrive at the conclusion that Our Saviour died of traumatic tetanus in the throes of a raging fever.

A long film would have made it possible to give these investigations in fuller detail. Gedda, however, was content to record the essentials. Thus, millions of people will become acquainted with the "Fifth Gospel" of the Passion and, at the same time, the cultured spectator will be afforded an opportunity of making an apologetic study of incontestable value.

Recent attempts to retrace the drama of the Passion of Christ, however far they may have gone, lack that force of conviction to be found in these three hundred metres of film.

The film was shown at the International Congress of Catholic Doctors recently held in Rome. The prolonged applause that followed proved this scientific assembly's admiration for Professor Gedda's effort.

Special commendation goes to the young director Marcel Baldi (Blasetti's assistant for Fabiola), *who, though he had but very few spectacular elements at his disposal — only documents —, succeeded in uniting them to form a surprisingly well-balanced whole by adding a commentary which, by its density and conciseness, at times attained a highly dramatic tone.*

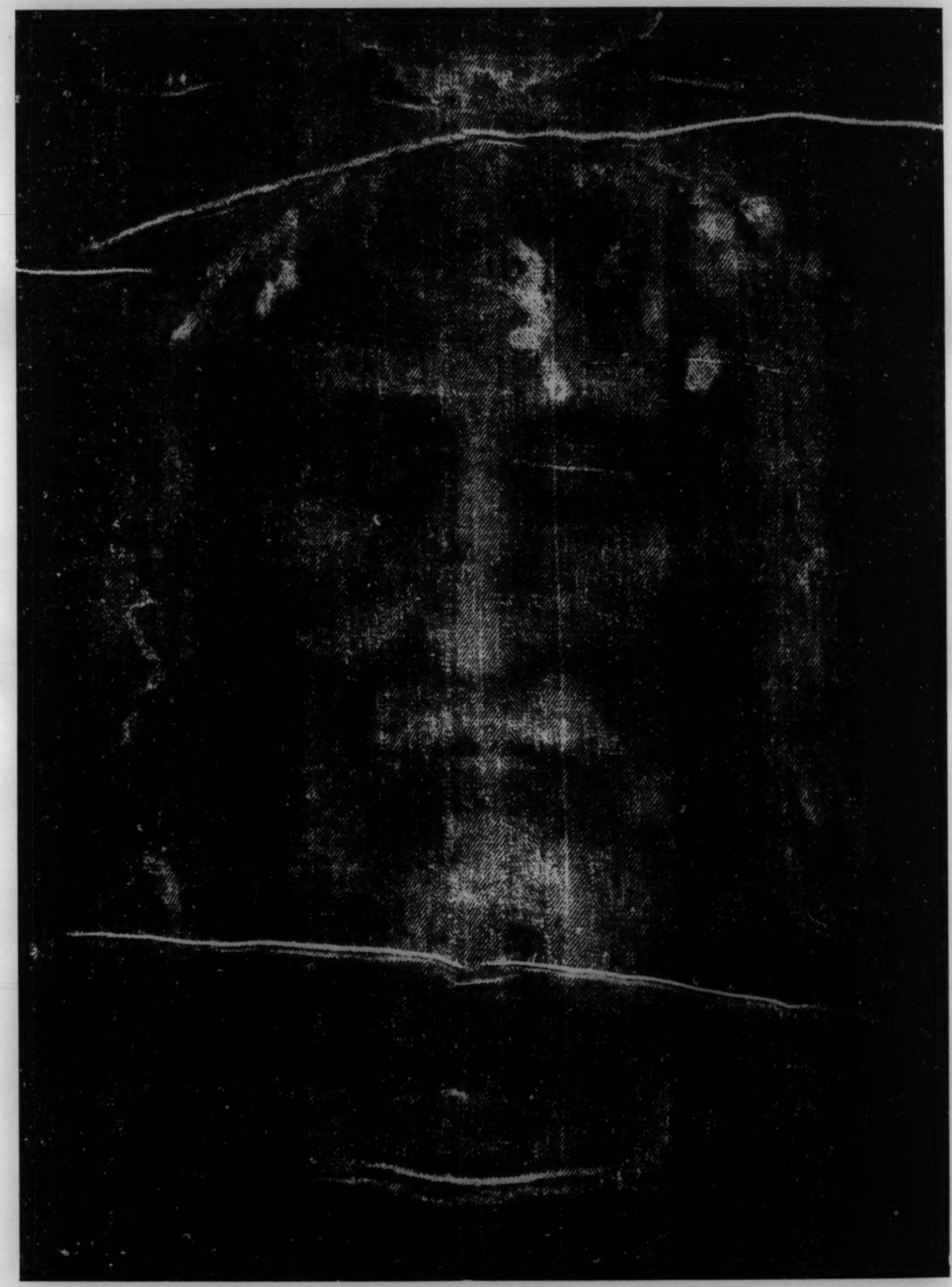
This short documentary will soon be showing in several versions and is to be distributed throughout the world.

Vitaliano Rovigatti.

---

[1]) Under the direction of Prof. Luigi Gedda, vice-president of Italian Catholic Action.

[2]) The principle of the negative was practically unknown before the XIXth century.



This photograph of the Holy Shroud (detail) is as old as the cinema

THE "PHOTO" OF OUR LORD

A film entitled The Photograph of Christ *was recently completed at the "Cinecittà" studios in Rome.* 1)

It is documentary on the Holy Shroud conserved in Turin Cathedral. However impossible it may seem after the passing of twenty centuries, the film indisputably confirms the Gospel writings relating the Passion of Our Lord.

For the first time, the venerable relic was subjected to the lens of the film camera. The event is one of capital significance, for it must be recalled that the jealously guarded Holy Shroud has been publicly exhibited only under very exceptional circumstances: on the occasion of Holy Years or in connection with other specially important celebrations.

Luigi Gedda, doctor and university professor, was the prime mover in this undertaking designed to achieve a twofold purpose: first, scientifically to demonstrate that the Holy Shroud is incontestably the shroud wrapped around the body of Jesus Christ; second, to deduce from this relic further confirmation of the details of the Passion set forth in the Gospel stories. Indeed, Gedda, who devoted several years to the study of the Holy Shroud, declared that it could very well be defined as the Fifth Gospel.

The documentary develops in "lineal" fashion. The evangelical account of the entombment and of the resurrection has already formed the subject of screen commentaries, supported by the presentation of masterpieces of the painter's art (Botticelli, Guerino, Mantegna, Angelico, Clovio, etc,). In this case, the film retraces the history of the Holy Shroud, beginning with several very ancient documents and ending with the present day.

The Holy Shroud is the winding-sheet which, according to tradition, was wrapped around the body of Our Saviour, from the feet, around the head and back over the feet. As a result of the evaporation of the balsams used (myrrh and aloes) the shroud received a double impress of Christ: dorsal and facial, sepia in colour, which despite the intervening centuries and the many journeys made by the relic, are still clearly visible. To the naked eye, however, the two imprints are far from resemble a portrait. There was considerable surprise when the photographic plate used for the reproduction of the shroud was being developed. A negative image was expected and instead of this a positive image appeared. The Holy Shroud would, therefore, be only a "photographic negative" of the face of Jesus Christ. He is the only personage of ancient times whose photograph has come into our possession. 2)

After this amazing and unforeseen discovery, scientists conducted a series of experiments and researches with the object of determining the nature and significance of the details printed on the flaxen sheet; their work made it possible to verify the authenticity of the flagellation, of the crowning with thorns and the piercing of the wrists (not the hands) with nails. It was even possible to measure Christ's height, to identify the nature of the water that flowed from His side and to arrive at the conclusion that Our Saviour died of traumatic tetanus in the throes of a raging fever.

A long film would have made it possible to give these investigations in fuller detail. Gedda, however, was content to record the essentials. Thus, millions of people will become acquainted with the "Fifth Gospel" of the Passion and, at the same time, the cultured spectator will be afforded an opportunity of making an apologetic study of incontestable value.

Recent attempts to retrace the drama of the Passion of Christ, however far they may have gone, lack that force of conviction to be found in these three hundred metres of film.

The film was shown at the International Congress of Catholic Doctors recently held in Rome. The prolonged applause that followed proved this scientific assembly's admiration for Professor Gedda's effort.

Special commendation goes to the young director Marcel Baldi (Blasetti's assistant for Fabiola), *who, though he had but very few spectacular elements at his disposal — only documents —, succeeded in uniting them to form a surprisingly well-balanced whole by adding a commentary which, by its density and conciseness, at times attained a highly dramatic tone.*

This short documentary will soon be showing in several versions and is to be distributed throughout the world.

Vitaliano Rovigatti.

---

1) Under the direction of Prof. Luigi Gedda, vice-president of Italian Catholic Action.

2) The principle of the negative was practically unknown before the XIXth century.

I. RELIGIOUS THEMES IN THE SCENARIOS OF THE LAST FIFTY YEARS

The cinema has, from its earliest days, sought to illustrate the events recorded in the Bible. Even Louis Lumière, whose work was far removed from the sphere of "theatrical" cinema formulae, (1) offered his clients, in 1896, a film of the *Oberammergau Passion Play* that had been made at Horitz as a documentary; then in 1897, *The Life and Passion of Jesus Christ*, the first scenic reconstitution of the life of Our Lord presented in a 220 metres film full of comforting words and good intentions. Lumière's scenario was typical and gave a clear idea of the fundamentals which were, at that time, thought necessary for transforming the Gospel into short comprehensible tableaux. Here are the thirteen scenes that were presented (2):

The Adoration of the Magi : — "Inside the manger, the Virgin watches over the Infant Jesus. *A slave enters and announces* to Joseph the coming of the Kings who have been guided to the new-born Child by the Star. Entry of the Kings, who bow in humble reverence before the manger and lay the gifts and tributes which they have brought with them at the feet of the Holy Child."

The Flight into Egypt. — "Joseph, leading across the desert the ass bearing the Virgin and the Infant Jesus, halts for the night at the foot of the Sphinx. After installing the Virgin, he wraps his cloak around him and falls asleep. Roman soldiers break in on the scene to lays hands on the Virgin; but suddenly they see the Sphinx, symbol of divinity; they fall terrified upon their knees while Joseph aroused from sleep rushes towards them to protect the Virgin and her Child."

Arrival at Jerusalem. — "A street in Jerusalem, with Herod's palace on the left. Christ enters riding an ass. The crowd wave palm leaves as He passes, while the Apostles spread strips of cloth for the ass to walk on. Herod, in a moment of anger, shows his violent jealousy at seeing the triumph of Jesus on blessing the crowd kneeling around Him. He calls upon Judas to deliver Christ to him."

Betrayal by Judas. — "Inside Herod's palace Herod enters and summons Judas to his praetorium. Judas promises to deliver Christ in chains to him and receives, as the price of his betrayal, a casket of silver. Exit Judas swearing that he will carry out his sinister plan."

Resurrection of Lazarus. — "The body of Lazarus is borne in on a stretcher. His grief-stricken wife has pleaded Christ to give her back her husband. Jesus approaches the dead body and says: "Rise, Lazarus!" The body begins to move and the dead man comes to life amid a crowd moved by this miracle and bowing at the feet of the One who has just accomplished it."

The Last Supper. — "The Apostles are seated at table when Christ suddenly enters. He distributes the bread and wine, saying "Eat, drink; this is my body, this is my blood." Judas, seated to the right of Jesus, kisses him — a gesture which draws the following words from Him: "O, my brethren, one of you is about to betray me." There is a movement of surprise and indignation among the Apostles; they protest their faithfulness, while one of them, to the left of Jesus, kisses Him as Judas turns away his head."

Arrest of Christ. — "Jesus, with Joseph, the Virgin and Mary Magdalen, is resting in the forest. He is awakened by the noise of Herod's approach. Judas, who accompanies him, points to the man he has sold to him. Soldiers enter and, seizing Jesus, bind Him with chains."

The Flagellation. — "Christ, accompanied by Joseph and Mary Magdalen, is brought before Herod and lashed to a column in the centre of the praetorium; then, at a word of command from Herod, a soldier strikes Jesus for refusing to answer the questions put to Him. The Virgin and Mary Magdalen kiss Jesus' robe while Joseph appeals in vain to Herod for mercy."

The Crown of Thorns. — "Herod orders a soldier to place a crown of thorns around Jesus' forehead, while two others bring in the cross which they force Him to carry as He is dragged to the spot where He is to be crucified."

The Crucifixion. — "The scene opens with soldiers fixing to a cross two thieves who have been condemned to crucifixion on either side of Jesus. Christ arrives bearing his cross. He is stripped of his clothing and nailed to the cross."

Calvary. — "Jesus is crucified between two robbers. The one on the right adds his abuse to that of the soldiers, who insult Christ, defying Him to free Himself. The good robber, on the left, appeals, on the contrary, to Jesus for words of comfort and assures Him of his piety and faith. Obeying an officer, a soldier offers Christ a sponge soaked in vinegar. Christ dies, after casting one last look towards heaven."

The Entombment. — "Jesus is taken down from the cross by the soldiers, placed in a shroud and laid in the Sepulchre ; soldiers put back the cover stone, against which the Virgin and Mary Magdalen kneel in prayer."

The Resurrection. — "Soldiers are gathered around the tomb. A Roman officier reminds them that they are responsible to him for the body of Jesus. The soldiers fall asleep around the sepulchre; Jesus returns to life, raises the stone and appears before Mary Magdalen who was praying near the tomb."

The first American *Oberammergau Passion Play* was made by William C. Paley, who was so well acquainted with the Lumière film that he copied it. The Americans, horrified by the cost of making a film on location, thought of a local reconstruction. After all, Bavaria has nothing in common with Palestine, thought the New York producers and the roof-garden of a sky-scraper is admirably suited for the staging of a Passion Play. The scenario was by J. L. Vincent, Hollmann produced the film and Frank Russell played the part of Jesus.

In France, Lear (Kirchner) had the same idea, the same year, while W. Haggar in Great Britain — and we are quite certain of this — made the first film entitled *The Sign of the Cross*.

The year 1899 saw an ambitious Gaumont production: *The Life of Christ* (220 metres), followed by a short film by Méliès: *Christ walking on the Waters*. In 1900, Georges Méliès presented *Joan of Arc* (271 m.), a notable film for that time but directly inspired by the scenery of the Châtelet Theatre.

(1) *Louis Lumière inventeur*, by Maurice Bessy and Lo Duca. 132 in-8, 125 illus., Paris, 1948.

(2) Nos. 933 to 945 of the *Lumière Catalogue*.

Biblical subjects were very much in favour in the early days of the cinema. The unpretentious *Salome* (60 m., 1902), by Oscar Messter was the forerunner of a host of reels which it would be tedious and perhaps unnecessary to mention.

Between 1902 and 1904, Ferdinand Zecca directed, with untiring attention, *The Life and Passion of Jesus Christ;* he was personally responsible for the scenario and the manuscript, in a magnificent binding, remained at his bedside until the day of his death. His cinematographic style resembled Lumière's more than that of Méliès and his characters, very cleverly directed, were supported by scenic effects that dispensed with painted canvas as much as possible. The film consisted of four episodes and thirty-nine scenes.

In 1905, Ludwig Deutsch attempted a new 700 metre documentary on the *Oberammergau Passion Play*, a Warwick production, while "La Bonne Presse" entrusted Lear with the work of filming the *Passion Play* organised at Nancy. The Italians also turned their attention to the making of historico-religious films; their productions were *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (Cines 1908), *In hoc signo vinces* (Savoia, Turin, 1913); *The Holy Bible (La Sacra Biblia*, Aquila, Turin); a new *Joan of Arc*, by Mino Oxilia, with Maria Jacobini in the title role. The Italian film *Giovanna d'Arco* was followed, in 1914, by Cecil B. de Mille's *Joan the Woman*, the part of Joan, with long, luxuriant hair, being played by Geraldine Farrar.

1907, 1909 and 1911 were marked by a return of the usual *Passions of Jesus Christ*, one of them by Alice Guy (Gaumont), probably the first woman to gain prominence as a film director. In 1911 also, there was a film which cost only $35.000 but which brought in a million: *From the Manger to the Cross*. It was a triumph for the Kalem producers and yet the film was no more than a mixture of "beards and rugs."

In 1915, *Christus*, by Giulio Antamora, received no great attention in the turmoil of war, but the censorship took exception to a caption which read :

> "And Jesus said unto his disciples:
> "Peace be with ye."

In 1916, David Wark Griffith produced *Intolerance*. It will be remembered that a part of this stupendous film, *The Nazarene*, dealt with the intolerance of the Jewish clergy and is set in the year 27 A. D. Erich von Stroheim was the second Pharisee in *Judean Story*.

After the colossal production *Queen of Sheba* (Fox, 1922), in which were seen the Queen of Sheba, Solomon, David and a few Pharisees, and then a literary *Salome* (V. A., 1923), which came nearer to Oscar Wilde than to the Bible, Cecil B. de Mille amazed the world with his prodigious "fakes", but the supremacy of de Mille was shaken by the presentation of another superspectacular work : *Ben Hur*, which Fred Niblo produced from a scenario by June Mathis. It was not until 1927 that de Mille had his revenge with *King of Kings*, in which H. B. Warner played the part of Jesus, Dorothy Cumming that of Mary, and Ernest Torrence, Peter. The last named will never be forgotten for the expression of anguish in his impersonation of Saint Peter. There was an attempt to introduce a particular ideology in presenting Judas as a handsome man (Joseph Schildkraut). But though Europe may allow itself to be dazzled for a while by full-size reconstitutions of arenas and though it may not blink on seeing a Palestine where the riches of India would seem somewhat meagre compared with the lavish display of the treasures of Israel, in the long run it finds these scenes devoid of interest and ceases to believe in these Hollywoodian characters that have neither weight nor substance and no possible contact with anything human. The year 1927, in Europe, was marked by the appearance of Carl Th. Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc*, a film in which Falconetti unassumingly demonstrated how an actress should allow herself to be effaced by her faith. It was also in this same year that Marco de Gastyne produced his *Marvellous Life of Joan of Arc*, in which Simone Genevois endeavoured to incarnate Joan. It is, however, Dreyer's work that remains and which will fundamentally dominate the essentially religious films made in the course of a quarter of a century. The lesson thus taught had no effect on the ambitions of Cecil B. de Mille, for in 1932 he produced *The Sign of the Cross*, in which arena scenes and Roman opulence were more than conspicuous. Once again, the humble land of Abraham became a pompous proconsulate.

The film was rejuvenated in 1945 and a preamble added: American airmen were dropping leaflets over Rome. Rome is not a city on which bombs are dropped. It is the centre of Christendom, said the two airmen, because exactly 1900 years ago.... After this introduction, the old film was resumed — and people soon forgot that a few bombs had accompanied the leaflets.

In France, Julien Duvivier also produced a *Golgotha*, a film that was rather badly inspired by the American pictures (1935), while, in Germany, Gustav Ucicky set to work on *Das Mädchen Johanna*, in which the part of Joan was assigned to Angela Salloker.

If we set aside a few fragments that are lost in a hundred or so different films and apart from Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc*, it really seems that Holy Scripture, from the Old Testament to the Life of the Saints, is, so far as the cinema is concerned, merely a pretext for reaching a public thirsting to see the themes of their faith brought to life on the screen. But the good will of this public has too often been deceived by films unworthy of the subject chosen by producers for the unmistakable resonance of the title, relying on Christian mass-feeling to make a success of a practice that is nothing short of trickery. On the other hand, it would be only fair to grant some indulgence to film directors who handle a theme which often goes beyond their competence, if not beyond their faith. The religious theme of a film demands concentration of thought and determines certain exigencies that do not have to be met in the case of a mediocre film based on a subejct of no outstanding interest and which the spectators forget an hour after seeing it.

The historical film, more or less inspired by the Old or the New Testament, therefore involves a tremendous artistic and moral risk. Where there should be genius, we find only the minutiae of a group of archaeologists submerged in a mass of pasteboard. This is, moreover, a danger that arises in all historical evocations which refuse to adapt themselves to the eyes of XXth century people. It is for this reason that messages drawn from Holy Scripture have achieved their end more forcibly by means of artistic transposition, using the vivid language of a race or legend. *Green Pastures* (1936), by William Keighley and, of course, Marc Connelly, and *The Road to Heaven* (1941), by Alf Sjóberg, better satisfied the present-day demand for a religion whose expression is fresher and more real than that suggested by Western variants of the prayer wheel.

The Faith is a fire which those without it tend to forget.

Beside these messages, which are, in effect, modern parables it seems that "hagio-cinematography " is abandoning historical plots and workings, of which Alessandro Blasetti's *Fabiola* will no doubt be the latest example. The cinema, having discovered that it possessed unlimited gifts of introspection, devotes itself to monographs of saints, with a more thorough attention to style in a limited period of time and therefore display in greater. Examples are not lacking and they are all the more striking on account of their intimate tone, excluding that spectacular treatment so much to be deplored when the enlightenment of souls is at stake.

Sainte-Thérèse de Lisieux, *L'appel du Silence* (1939) and *La Route inconnue* (1947), by Léon Poirier, dedicated to Charles de Foucault; *The Song of Bernadette* (1943), the story of Bernadette Soubirous, by Henry King; *Monsieur Vincent* (Saint Vincent de Paul, 1948), by Maurice Cloche; *Ciel sur les Marais (Cielo sulla Palude*, 1949) by Augusto Genina, and *Le Sorcier du Ciel* (*The Curé of Ars*, 1949), by Marcel Blistène, with varying degrees of grandeur and sanctity, are all of this kind.

This represents a satisfactory harvest and is very gratifying, all the more that it would appear to be a sign of the times. However, perhaps we may be allowed to say, without offence to anybody, that these films mainly reached and appealed to an already converted audience. It would be interesting to know whether — apart from the ninety-nine that need no conversion — any one of these films touched the heart of one of the lost sheep, the stray ones so dear to the heart of Our Lord and, in a sense, the only ones that count.

MYLÉ
Paris.

II. THE CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE IN THE HISTORY OF ITALIAN SILENT FILMS

"A Catholic Cinema? Well, that's quite a question!" says Jean Morienval at the beginning of his survey of Christian influence in the history of the French cinema. The same may be said of the Italian cinema. In recalling the first efforts made in this direction in our country we must add that Catholic thought and usage have inspired many films in Italy. At the same time, the best manifestations of this tendency do not appear so much in scenarios drawn directly from Christian history as in the rather simple spirit of proselytising which came over the whole production of short films before 1910; the whole art then appeared as morality illustrated by pictures, expressing itself in a style fresh and graceful at once, admittedly primitive but always poetic. It is this second aspect of our survey which seems to us to be the more interesting.

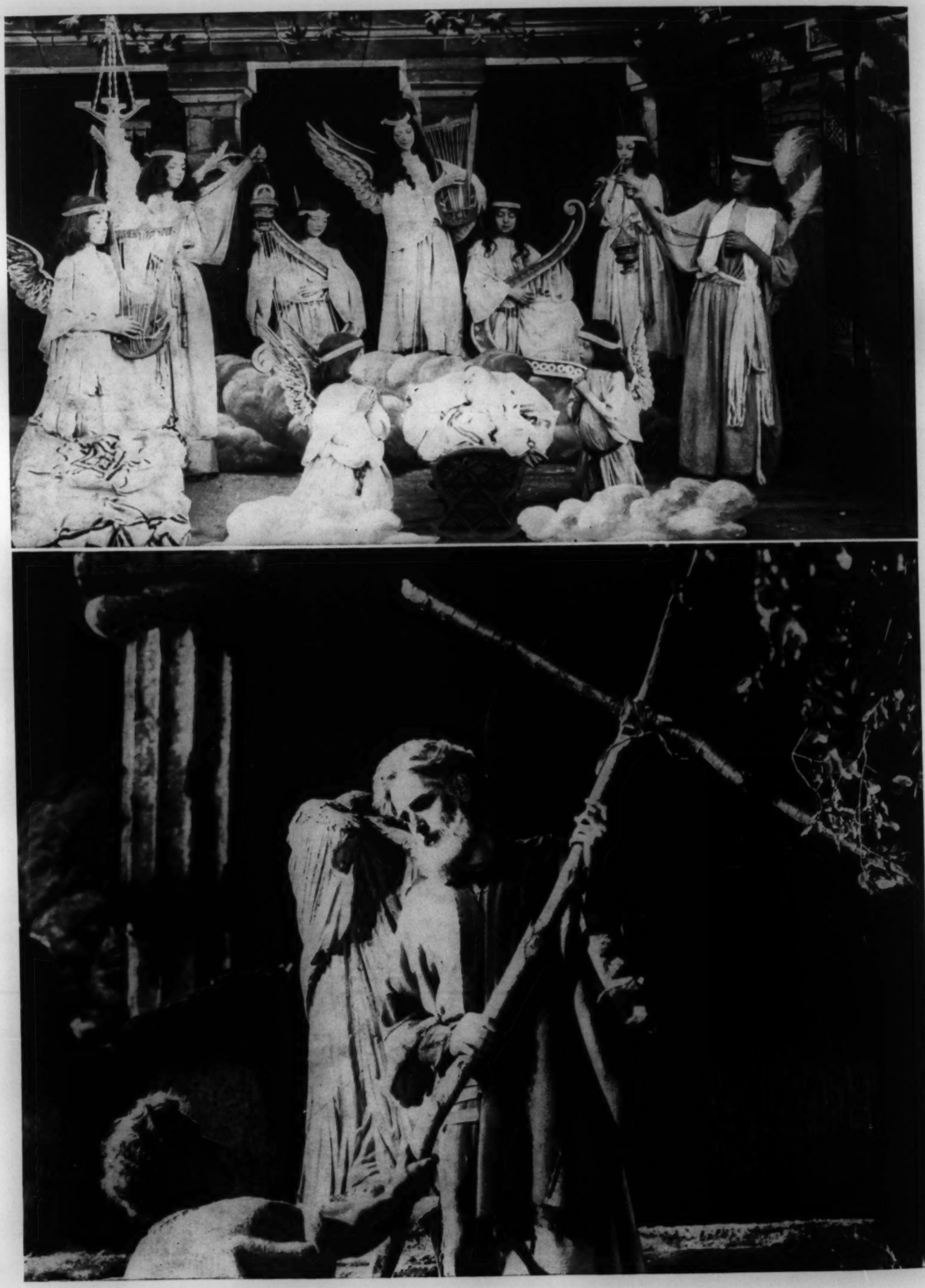
One of the first Italian productions with a direct Catholic inspiration is *Inferno*, taken from Dante's Divine Comedy and made about 1908 by Milano Films. It is a quaint piece of work but touching in its simple fantasy in which appear more devils and sulphur-flames than in the films of Méliès. The sinners look at the camera from time to time like celebrities in the early newsreels, and smile in spite of Charon who gives them some very dirty looks; he is stretched out on a rock, bare to the waist, with a quite impossible tail which reminds one irresistibly of the curious and delightful inventions of the master of Montreuil. Indeed this particular Charon is a very miracle of out of the way stage craft who recalls rather "400 Deeds of the Devil" than the Dantean epic. The Director, Giuseppe di Liguoro, had earlier had the courage to put on the screen, in films of less than 800 feet, *King Lear*, *Don Juan* and the *Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles which — to avoid mistakes — he did not hesitate to support with The Divine Comedy and "other famous authors on similar subjects" as the posters had it. Dante was a Neapolitan actor Salvatore Papa. With him naturally was Virgil, a rather sleepy Virgil who from time to time towed the great poet along by his cloak. Some lines from the poet's works and a red fire on the scenes in hell completed the Dantean atmosphere, at least in the film adapter's imagination. To give the work a favourable setting, the Royal Mercadente Theatre in Naples appeared one night all lit up with red lamps like a Montmartre cabaret. This unsophisticated, vulgar but faith-inspired spectacle went round the world, exciting in Muslim countries a protest against Alighieri "who had filled the world with his hatred of Arabs." The result was that Dante was made to appear as a poet without modesty or shame, possessing neither social nor literary merit.

Manzoni being a Christian author, we must mention in this review his "Fiancés" made in 1910 by Film d'Art Italien, the Roman subsidiary of Pathé. The character of Brother Christopher in this work was apparently drawn from popular imagination, especially in the scene where he cursed Don Roderigo with a telling emphasis which struck terror into provincial audiences. They were far too moved to notice such slight anachronisms as making Renzo's carriage cross tram-lines in a Roman street. When the sprocket-holes were worn and the image could not be steadied, the good brother appeared to perform a jerky dance which really did look like a manifestation from another sphere. It is difficult nowadays to recapture the simple, pleasant unreality of these old representations whose charm is due indeed to technical and artistic defects but is none the less infinitely more poetic than the *realistic* art which is produced to weariness by many directors today.

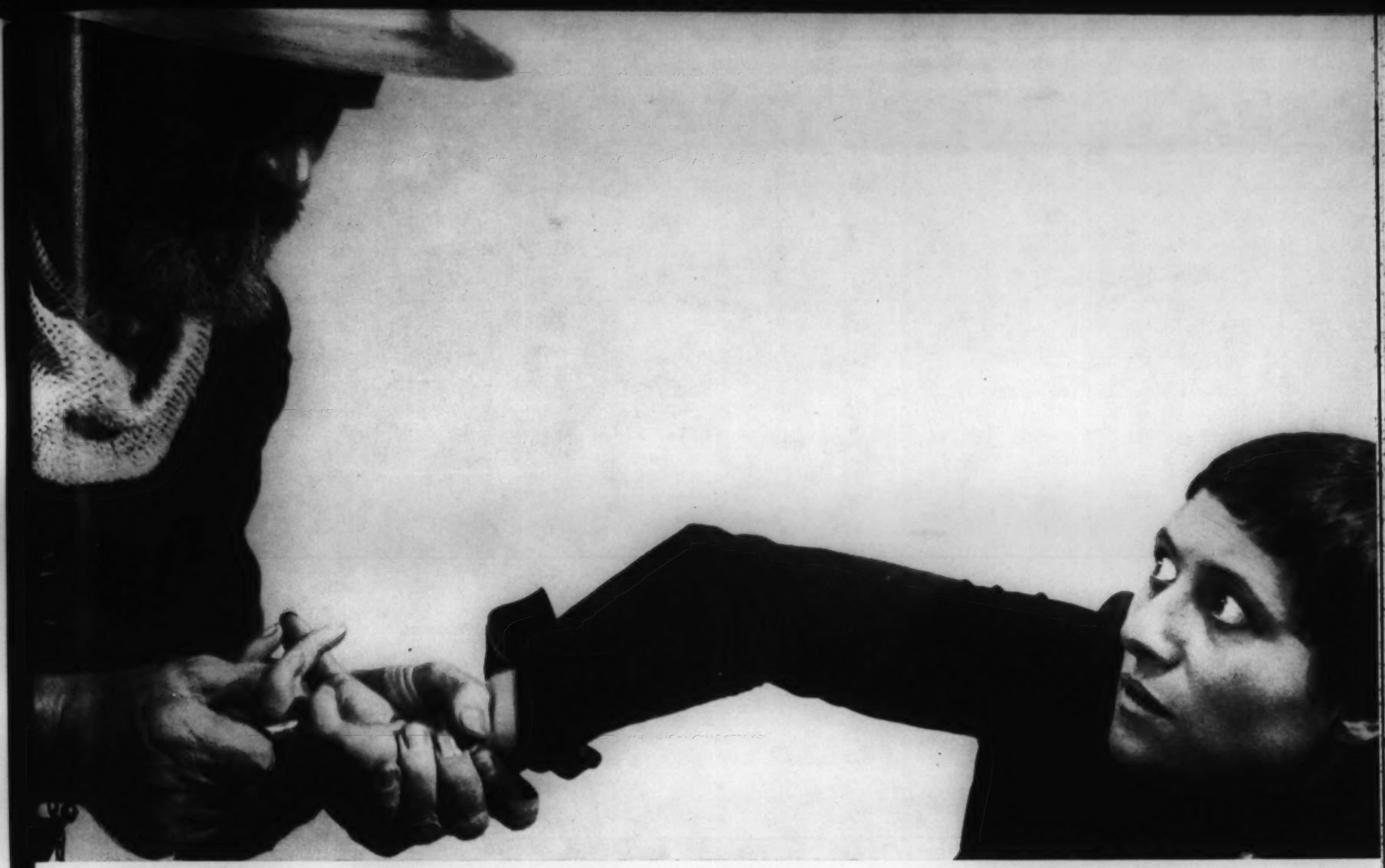
But the thing which inspired the Italian cinema in those days was really the conflict between two civilisations: the Christian and the Pagan. This is the central theme of the first films of this nature, such as *Nero* made by Ambrosio Films of Turin from a scenario by Arrigo Frusta and pictures by Roberto Omegna, the doyen of Italian cameramen. It reaches its peak in two great productions by Enrico Guazzoni, *Quo Vadis* (Cinés 1913) and *Fabiola* (Roma Films 1913). Enrico Guazzoni is the artist most

For the first time in history, the cinema, which is still the cinematograph of Louis Lumière, deals with the life of Jesus Christ. Two pictures from the 1897 film: *The Adoration of the Magi* and *The Resurrection.* *French Film Library*

Fifty-three years later: the cinema, through the Camera of the Italian neo-realism of Robert Rossellini, portrays the life of St. Francis of Assisi (The last picture in *Francesco giullare di Dio*, now being produced. St. Francis [centre] is played by one of the Minor Friars of Baronissi.) *Civirani*



The Nativity, by Ferdinand Zecca (1905). Saint Paul in Cecil B. De Mille's film *The Sign of the Cross* (1932)



Two scenes from Carl Th. Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1927). La Falconetti, the most human interpreter of the title role, as Joan.

Our Saviour comes down to earth in Alf Sjöberg's film *Himlaspelet* (The Road to Heaven) - 1942: Anders Henrikson and Eivor Landström.

representative of the movement; until then he had specialised as a painter recognised by the Institute of Fine Arts, in simple little pictures of the Rome of King Umberto or of the romantic period; such, for instance, as is portrayed by Hoffman, with its suburban restaurants furnished with barrels and little tables laid for dinner. But his real vocation was the cinema.

The first version of *Jerusalem Delivered* (1911) is his; taken from a poem by Torquato Tasso, the film's chief part, Godfroy de Bouillon, was given to Amleto Novelli whose face, full of a strange, deep melancholy, somewhat recalled Hamlet. Armida, against a Wardour Street oriental background, appeared dressed in a kind of pyjamas which in those days was the acme of local colour. The press was very favourable. In the columns of a leading review a critic declared, "Cinés has risen far above other companies in this film, and I am happy to be able to sing its praises through the medium of this distinguished publication. A guardian angel, perhaps the very one who appeared to the poet, must have looked after Cinés during the film's preparation."

But the year of Guazzoni's triumph was 1913, the year of the first version of *Quo Vadis*, which starred the Countess Rina de Liguoro, whom a French critic described as a "young Italian countess, sweet and charming, with a steadfastness in her look which one sees only in Raphael's Madonnas."

It is not the business of this article to emphasise the value of such a film in the history of the cinema. Let us say, however, that in this film for the first time the Italian architectural flair applied to the new art the principles of perspective, working with the very limited means of those days, and achieving that masterly handling of space which is even today one of the undisputed merits of the Italian school.

Those who are familiar with the history of our painting will not be surprised by this. This experimenting in perspective is one of the basic problems of the Italian artist, from Giotto who went beyond Byzantine painting in his portrayal of a third dimension, to the first clumsy perspectives of Paolo Ucello, who upset the Florentines to whom his work was meaningless, from Piero della Francesca obsessed by it to the point of looking out through a window at a darkened yard saying "What beautiful perspective", to Raphael in whom, says Faure, it is part of the instinctive methods of the painter who no more thinks of it than does the writer of spelling.

The early Italian film makers followed the same path in their religious pictures. Masters, as were the painters, of two dimensions, they tried to create the impression of the third. It was in this way that Enrico Guazzoni was the first in his reconstruction of pagan Rome, to leave wide measures of lighted space between the camera and the scene he was making, which moreover were set in the open and not in a studio. He made use in his field of view of more buildings and amphitheatres, filling the space between with triumphal chariots, pot-bellied amphorae and scattered crowds so as to create by means of imposing mass displayed on different planes, and by a thousand other details, an idea of supreme spaciousness. This discovery is as important in the history of the cinema as was that of perspective to Paolo Ucello and Piero della Francesca.

In the same year there were three versions of *The Last Days of Pompeii* from Bulwer Lytton's novel; they were made by Gloria Films, with Mario Caserini directing, Ambrosio films and Pasquali Films. Even when long films had become a regular feature of programmes, the Italian cinema held to its favourite theme, the struggle between Christianity and paganism; one could mention *Nero and Agrippina* by Mario Caserini (1914), a second version of *Jerusalem Delivered* (1918) and another of *Fabiola* (1918) both by Guazzoni, who, in 1923 was to make the famous *Messalina* which is still so often shown in programmes of past techniques.

In 1926, Carmine Gallone made yet another version of *The Last Days of Pompeii*. But the Italian Cinema Union had already launched in 1923 the second *Quo Vadis* by Georg Jacoby (with Emil Jannings) but his imagination was not so fertile as Guazzoni's. So much so that of this German director's film it has been pointed out that when Nero is speaking to the Pretorian Guard he looks more like Frederick the Great addressing his grenadiers.

The Italian cinema drew inspiration too, from Christian history as in *Joan of Arc* made in 1913 by Mario Caserini from a scenario by the minor poet Guido Gozzano and in the *Bible* concentrated its 3,000 feet of film by the director Livo Pugliese. About 1920 Fausto Salvatori and Duilio Caramba made *St. George* and *La Mirabile Visione* the latter based on the life of Dante. While it was being made, the great philosopher Benedetto Croce, at that time Minister for Education, came officially to watch the work. There happened to be, according to the scenario, a roughly imitated manuscript on which the poet was supposed to write his poems at night. Croce's passion for books overcame all other considerations and he bent over the manuscript to see how the imitation had been done. After which, without so much as a glance at Dante and Beatrice who were standing under the arc lights rather embarrassed by the philosopher's presence, he shut the book and left the studios without saying a word.

A little later *The Last Gospel* in "five chapters and sixty verses" was directed by Febo Mari and the Franciscan religious film *Brother Sun* was made by Mario Corsi in "four songs, chorus and orchestra" by Maestro Mancinelli for La Tespi Films, a new firm which wanted to launch an artistic production.

The only Italian version of the Life of Our Lord was *Christus*, the outside shots of which were done in Egypt under the direction of Count Antamoro; Leda acted in this work. *Gys* was a film admired and praised by Eleonora Duse for its beautifully plastic composition. On this subject she drew attention, in a letter to Ricardo Artuffo, to the little flowers moving at the passing feet of the Virgin. The film had a strange history; Brasillach reports that it became an object of veneration in the East, and even in 1935 was revived during Holy Week. Women, who thought they were present at the original events, cried and shrieked at the scenes of Calvary or even fainted, as they sometimes do during religious processions.

In this class we must also mention a third movement, that of the Neapolitan school. We remember particularly the *Miracle of St. Januarius* attributed to Guazzoni, the leading character of which was a paralysed woman, a sort of Thérèse Raquin of the slums, who suddenly threw down her crutches and rushed to her balcony to sing the praise of the statue of the Virgin which seemed to halt in its progress for a moment as if wishing to enter the window and embrace the miraculously cured woman.

In its pictures, the Neapolitan spirit exalts its conception of life and death; rather crude pictures, prodigal of altars loaded with ex-voto offerings, gay wedding breakfasts, the trundling carts of Piedigrotta, religious processions, long stone perspectives of cloisters and monasteries, the miracle of Christmas, flower-decked graves, the plumed, carriages of Montevergine. Every detail of objects bearing the print of the Faith is shown. Papal orders, scapulars,

amulets, relics and monstrances. This antithesis of life and death is pointed sharply by pictures of old broken-down workmen strumming guitars with a sort of gloomy relish worthy of the brush of a Goya.

Max Jacob tells the story of his conversion, which seems to have been brought about on December 16th, 1914 by the film *La bande des habits noirs* (Eclair) from a novel by Paul Féval.

"The first time You came in my house,
"And the second in the cinema. —
"You go then to the cinema ?
"A confessor asked thunderstruck.
"Well, Father, wasn't Our Lord there?"
Jacob was right.

Actually the figure of Christ appeared very early on the screen, in the first *Life of Jesus* made by Pathé. It was taken on a tour of the villages of France and projected on a sheet billowing in the wind to an audience of peasants and farm labourers on Sunday evenings after Vespers, while the smell of hay and stables recalled the atmosphere of the Nativity. At one point in the film, one of the Magi congratulates St. Joseph, who with touching humility, points to heaven.

Thus, in Italy the cinema, which was later to be called the school of bad habits, was born in an atmosphere of profound morality. Its concept was the elements of the catechism illustrated in naive mechanical manner by popular imagery.

The first films of the early Italian craftsmen are concerned with the aim of moral edification. Its posters show the faith of a child reconciling unworthy parents, the St. Bernard finding the traveller in the snow, the crusader's return to his faithful wife on Easter Day. We are in the realm of the Abbé Delille's verses, Pierre Thouar's stories and the illustrations of the "Domenica del Corriere." These early films are merely proverbs brought to life in pictures. Simple people, sinful with primitive reactions, pursue the goal of redemption which, achieved in the last moments of the film, impressed audiences deeply. It is perhaps impossible to-day to imagine the effects produced by these obscure warnings with their implacable simplicity and terrible directness. The poet Apollinaire, referring to a French film of the same type, spoke of the great pleasure he took in seeing these brief moralisms which were in no sense art, but whose pathos was irresistible. Even apart from the story or the recounting of a cruel and adverse destiny, the characters give the impression of wax figures from an instructive museum. The poet lives in an attic and loves flowers; the sculptor has long hair; the butler, side-whiskers; the officer is be-medalled and has a scar; the composer has dishevelled hair and sunken eyes; the sinner has a dull, gloomy expression. But the edifying end of the films always recalls the simple, pictured catechism of the infant school.

It is true that later René Clair would be able to smile at the delicious mannerisms and the mechanica[1], conventional typing of old European films and would succeed in recapturing in *Le Silence est d'Or* the peculiar atmosphere of the productions of those days. But at the time we speak of, the cinema is at the age that has discovered the devil but not the passions, when sin is something to be feared and redemption is hoped for, which thinks that hell is peopled by demons and that Innocence goes to Mass on Sunday.

In Italy the type continued until 1911, at which date the Danish cinema had already posed the question of eroticism and the passions with a freedom hitherto unknown.

In Italy, the moral and edifying tendency persisted, for example in the pathetic story made by Cinés *Vezzo di Perle Perdute* in 1908 which tells the story of a deserted child who carries the broken necklace to a mansion while outside a snowstorm rages and within the rich are feasting and dancing. Everything is presented as pure and lovable, as in the stories of Edmondo de Amicis. In *Legge del Destino* (Acquile Films 1910) the foundling girl, helped by a Franciscan friar, finds her lost parents and, in the person of her rescuer, the fount, the true happiness of love. Another film of the same type is *I Rintocchi dell'Ave Maria* produced in 1911 by Itala Films, showing the salutary influence which the voice of Faith can have on feeble and errant souls. In a little frontier town a good-for-nothing youth falls in with evil companions but at the moment when he is about to climb a palace wall in order to steal, he hears the Angelus bell which his father, a devout peasant, is ringing while he prays that his son may be brought back to the right path. The bells remind the boy of his childhood and he gives up his project and goes home, saved.

Above all, Italian films of this period abound in ghosts; ghosts are produced in films by superimposing the visitor from Beyond on to the actual film. The most disturbing feature of these apparitions is their transparency. They are misty shapes through which the details of the room, pictures, doors and furniture can be seen. The disquieting moral effects which early Italian films achieved by this means are another aspect of the "moral comedies" of the first masters.

I often think what spine-chilling use Shakespeare would have made of this device had he been a film director, since in the theatre it was he who most powerfully conjured up these pale apparitions on city walls, on battlements, at graveyard gates, at crossroads, in dim ruins and from stagnant pools. But in Italian films of the days we are discussing, the ghost is rather a familiar object and not confined to moated granges or black midnight. It is more realistic than romantic and its appearance is compatible with the drawing-room, the period dining-room, the tool-keeper's cottage or the peasant's barn.

In *Drama in un'Osteria*, published by Cinés in 1910, we see the arrival of a mysterious traveller, soaked to the skin, at night, to the accompaniment of a thunderstorm, gusty winds, and thunderous knockings. The pot-boy is going to the door but the innkeeper, a big man with a heavy beard, holds him back. He himself will see to the proper reception of the nocturnal guest; the pot-boy had better go to bed. A gesture, a kick and the boy goes quietly to his attic. Treachery is already in the air. The innkeeper opens the door. The story requires the traveller to have a well-filled purse and while drinking with his host he begins to talk freely. The innkeeper does not seem to be paying much attention but since he is a blackhearted villain — at least he obligingly tells the audience so — the guest suddenly falls into a stupor and the rest develops naturally. The host leaps on the traveller from behind and finishes him off with a hammer. Next morning Justice arrives in the persons of the two classic policemen of the old Italian cinema. The innkeeper swears he knows nothing, that he went to bed early and left the pot-boy to look after the traveller. The innocent boy is in tears. At that moment the ghost appears. Terrified, the guilty wretch falls on his knees, crosses himself and confesses. How well we remember those ghosts. They complete the dramatic framework of the period in its essential features of example and morality.

The frequent captions added to this moral and didactic character. The arrest of the criminal suggested a thought of gratitude for the police force, victims to duty, the last

heroes of the fight against lawbreakers. We are shown that crime does not pay, that God's arm is not the shortest, that pardon is the best revenge and that lack of diligence destroys the family. In these films the captions explain everything and the characters illustrate the title. ("The marquis' carriage awaits and it is a pleasure to serve you.") They are like the titles of pictures by Rousseau. "The Sleeping Gipsy", painting in colour by M. Rousseau, with a sleeping gipsy in a foreign landscape who is being sniffed at by a lion with a flowing main. Or else "The Hungry Lion" (painting in colour by M. Rousseau) leaps on the antelope and eats it while the panther waits for his share !

On the other hand, in these films the actors' names are not shown on the leading strip which merely gives the firm's trade marks.

The programme always ended with "Goodbye and Thank You". The cinema was a little too near the showman's tent not to end with its thanks to the respectable public. This little farewell sometimes contained surprises; broken letters formed themselves into a greeting by joining up, on a dark background, or else a triumphant "goodnight" appeared in colour between violet clouds, just under a gilded balustrade which ill suited the simple and allegorical programme. Just before Easter the "Goodbye and Thank You" was made up of a musical pentagramme with Easter eggs instead of notes and angels kneeling at the bottom. The show was then really over and the audience, not yet made lazy by the critics and by trailers of future films, left to the next week the choice of programme and its budding pleasure in the cinema.

Roberto PAOLELLA
Naples

DANIEL-ROPS

Impact of the Cinema on Spiritual Life

The enormous popularity of religious films is a fact the importance of which must not be underestimated. Even when traceable to a strictly commercial origin — let us admit we have in mind the success of *Monsieur Vincent* — we rejoice, nevertheless, at the sight of people thronging to witness a film expressing — more or less — the souls' aspiration toward God. It suffices to have noticed the audiences emerging from the cinema where they have beheld such pictures to gauge the influence — from the apologetic standpoint alone — of the cinema. A certain Little Sister of the Poor who had the clever idea of begging for alms at the exit of a theatre showing Maurice Cloche's masterpiece told a friend that she had thus received very considerable amounts. If the art of the screen resulted only in awakening people's conscience to the obligation of charity, the time and money spent on it would not be wasted.

However, this very vogue for religious films presents the problem which to me seems all important: that of spiritual experience as such and the opportunites that the cinema may have of fostering it. To what extent can these pictures unrolling before our eyes evoke within us a true spiritual response and set us yearning for the Ineffable? How far are producers ready to go in pursuit of this end — or do they regard such religious element as holiness for example, as an artistic factor of a peculiar type? To the Catholic conscience this is an extremely delicate question to which perhaps too little attention has been drawn.

As a matter of course this pre-occupation is to some producers a dead letter. Unhappily, the most "sensational" Christian film of latter days — *Fabiola* — belongs entirely to this category. No doubt the drama of the Persecutions, in itself so stirring, awakens in our hearts so many echoes that inevitably here and there, even in so spectacular a film, a definite spiritual emotion is felt; for example when confronted by such characters as Tarcisius and St. Sebastian. But it is obvious that the dominating truth of Persecution, i. e. Martyrdom regarded as a real Sacrament and even *the* Sacrament par excellence, that which identifies man with Christ crucified, was absolutely foreign to the understanding and the intentions of M. Salvo d'Angelo. Similarly, the terrific force which uplifted primitive Christianity and flung it into combat against the Roman world — this victorious crusade accomplished through the willing sacrifice of thousands and thousands of human beings, has in his hands and by his methods fallen from sublimity and lost its spiritual appeal. There we note a flagrant case where the spiritual poverty of the man who deals with an authentically Christian theme may do it grievous injustice.

There exists another type of case — no less characteristic — and most aptly illustrated by the American film *Joan of Arc* wherein triumphs the admirable actress Ingrid Bergman. Here are no irritating discords as in *Fabiola.* Hollywood, which might well have overwhelmed us with showy splendour, has had the wisdom here to employ relatively simple means; moreover the film is incontestably true psychologically in the sense that Joan is presented with fitting restraint and simplicity; from beginning to end there is not a sequence where Ingrid Bergman strikes a false note or fails to convince. Let us repeat: her impersonation is psychologically "fair and fit". Is this enough? No. To a Catholic, the essence of Joan of Arc's story is the mystical face-to-face encounter of a soul with God: sublime communion whose language may be understood only by angels. Now this essential is just what the producers of the film have missed. The Joan of Arc we see is the perfect patriot who speaks of her beloved France so movingly. But what of the Saint? When do we see her? For a few seconds in the scene of her Communion before dying, for a little while — in a way that may arouse argument — at the stake. Here then is inadequacy because the authors have not sufficiently understood their cen-

tral personage and have not aimed at depicting the soul of a Saint. A very fine film, though not a masterpiece, *Joan of Arc* will have spiritual importance only for those spectators who, really conversant with Joan's history, are able to contribute something of their own. Whilst appreciating the good fortune that an American film should present no obstacle to this, we cannot be satisfied with such a result.

But here arises another and more precise question: To what extent is it possible for the cinema, by dint of pictures and of words necessarily comprehensible to the general public, to express real spiritual experience? The difficulty is plainly evident in two films which do possess in this respect incontestable qualities: I mean *Le Sorcier du Ciel* by Blistène and *Cielo sulla Palude* by Genina. In both of these the authors have certainly understood the problems involved. Have they found the answers? We would not like to say. Genina's very lovely film, in choosing to stress the human and earthly aspect of the drama of Maria Goretti, has in no way prevented us from recognising the sanctity of the angelic little heroine on whom the Church is about to bestow her highest honour. Holiness so virginal and lowly can be but felt, and merely allows of portrayal. Has the author succeeded in making it felt? Here and there, perhaps, but chiefly by surrounding the heroine with an ambiance of sacrifice, a radiance of purity and charity. Yes, nevertheless, when after seeing the film one reads the life of Maria Goretti and the unadorned and amazing details of the process of beatification, one cannot but think that the cinema here is a hindrance rather than a means to communicating the truth. That is why, perhaps, some spectators are obviously mystified as to why Maria sacrifices her life. The greatest of Christian themes: Sin and the refusal to commit it — was exemplified in the brief life of this humble peasant girl; it would be excessive to claim that Genina's film makes this clear to the public.

So likewise, with *Le Sorcier du Ciel*. Georges Rollin's impersonation is superb. With unusual power and veracity he has merged himself in his part. The aim of the director — himself it seems an agnostic — is to lead the spectator to conclude that the one answer to all problems is God. Beyond doubt, too, the film suggests very forcibly the soul of a true priest overflowing with love for mankind. But — must one say it — after seeing the film is one really confident of having grasped its meaning? Has one properly understood that the guiding force of this priest's soul is supernatural love — a love transcending all earthly loves — a manifestation of the Eternal Compassion? I do not think so. God is admitted and acknowledged, but He is not ubiquitous; He is not the Alpha and Omega; not the sole motive force of the whole drama. To what can we ascribe this? Perhaps to the very conditions governing this marvellous yet deceptive art of the modern cinema. By the very nature of these conditions it concerns itself too straitly with human and temporal matters. This splendid art of the cinema, evoking the lowly and sorrowful as well as the sublime, must reach us through our very humanity, base and noble by turns. If from time to time the expression on a face (I am thinking of Pierre Fresnay in *Monsieur Vincent*) gives us a passing sense of the Ineffable, that surely is a lovely thing — yet it belongs rather to the order of the senses than to that of the spirit. "This concept shorn of all images", spoken of by a great mystic — the Blessed Suso —, which is the concept of Divinity, can it be attained through an art which by its very nature postulates the use of images? Just as the noblest literature can never describe God but can only offer Him to a consciousness rapt beyond all expression in the silence of contemplation, so the cinema, by its very essence, is faced with what may be, for it, a complete impossibility.

To sum up: films may play a considerable part in the field of apologetics: in the realm of theology they are practically impotent.

Iconography: Sacred faces and film actors

The theatre has a pictorial art of its own: make-up. An actor made up for the stage makes his entry and seems to form part of the scenery. The camera, by which everything is magnified cannot tolerate theatrical make-up; it is destructive of verisimilitude and detrimental to the authenticity of the picture.

The art of facial make-up can, however, serve to accentuate certain reconstitutions or certain effects, but in such cases it must become part of the personality of the actor. In Monsieur Vincent *— an exemplary film in that respect too — the expression in Pierre Fresnay's eyes invariably reveals the keen intelligence of the man with the character. The depth and intensity of the cinema alone makes it possible to seize its full significance. Cinematographic iconography thus becomes far more a spiritual problem than a matter of aesthetics. When facing the camera, an actor must, from the depths of his soul, "live" the saintly character he is supposed to represent. Any other attitude would be offensive and sacrilegious.*

Renée Falconetti (1902—1946) would seem to be the first example of a superhuman interpretation approaching the miraculous. Her Joan of Arc was a mortification of the flesh of the player carried to the utmost possible limit. The Passion of Joan of Arc, *which Dreyer produced in 1927, gave one the impression of being confronted with a deathless epic. The marvellous setting so austere in its unity and rigour, corresponded perfectly with the grandeur of the impersonation. Falconetti showed "how an actor should allow himself to be effaced by his faith." *)*

It was not until the coming of Monsieur Vincent *that we saw another interpretation of similar purity. In this film, it is Jean Anouilh who speaks through Pierre Fresnay, thanks to Maurice Cloche. Certain Catholics were shocked by this film. Bossuet, in one of his panegyrics had already referred to this dislike when he quoted the words of St. Paul "To the Jews a stumblingblock". At the name of Bossuet, these same Catholics hid their faces. Having never read him, they did not know that he had even questioned the legitimacy of riches and had recalled that, "from the beginning, Nature (....) had conferred upon all her children an equal right to all the things they needed for the preservation of their life" (1652).*

In the long series of iconographic films, we find only one other example of the same quality. It comes from the new Italian School, which has succeeded in substituting the creature for the actor. In Augusto Genina's Cielo Sulla Palude, *we have before us one of the most beautiful "incarnations" of a saint: Maria Goretti. Ines Orsini, an unknown and uneducated peasant girl takes us back to the earthly life of that humble Christian whom the Church is to raise to the altars on June 24th, 1950.*

These three examples indicate the heights that can be attained by the cinema. No doubt there are others, but they have been obliged to accept artistic, dramatic or spectacular compromises which necessarily deprives them of that spiritual integrity which, it seems to us, is the prime requisite of religious films.

Ernest Torrence's impersonation of Saint Peter in The King of Kings, *the interpretations of Rex Ingram and Anders Henrikson in the roles of The Lord God in* Green Pastures *and* The Road to Heaven, *that of Georges Rollin in* Le Sorcier du Ciel, *Robert Darenne in* Route Inconnue, *Massimo Girotti as Saint Sebastian in* Fabiola, *Irène Corday in* Sainte Thérèse, *Jennifer Jones as Bernadette of Lourdes* (The Song of Bernadette), *and lastly of Ingrid Bergman as Joan of Arc* (Joan of Arc), *all these deserve to be mentioned and to have a place in the ideal iconography that each of us pictures in his heart.*

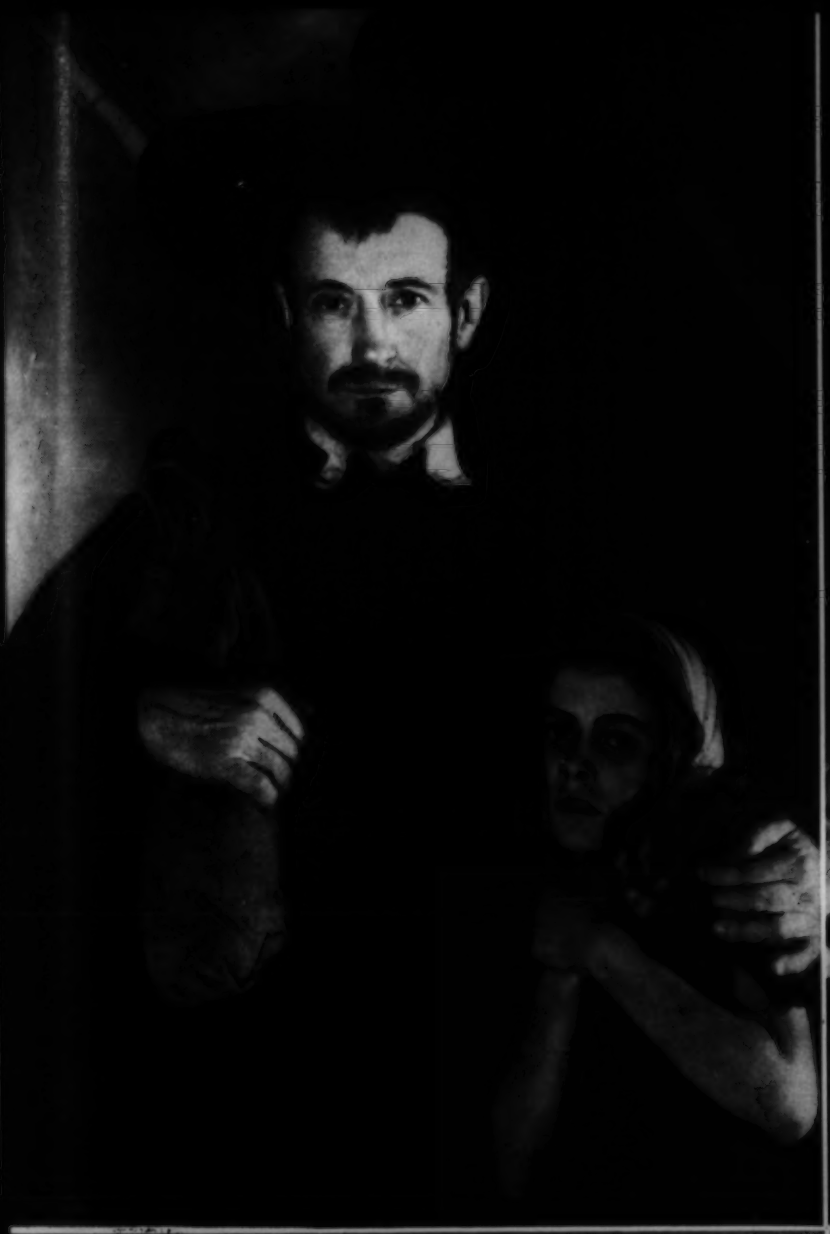
*

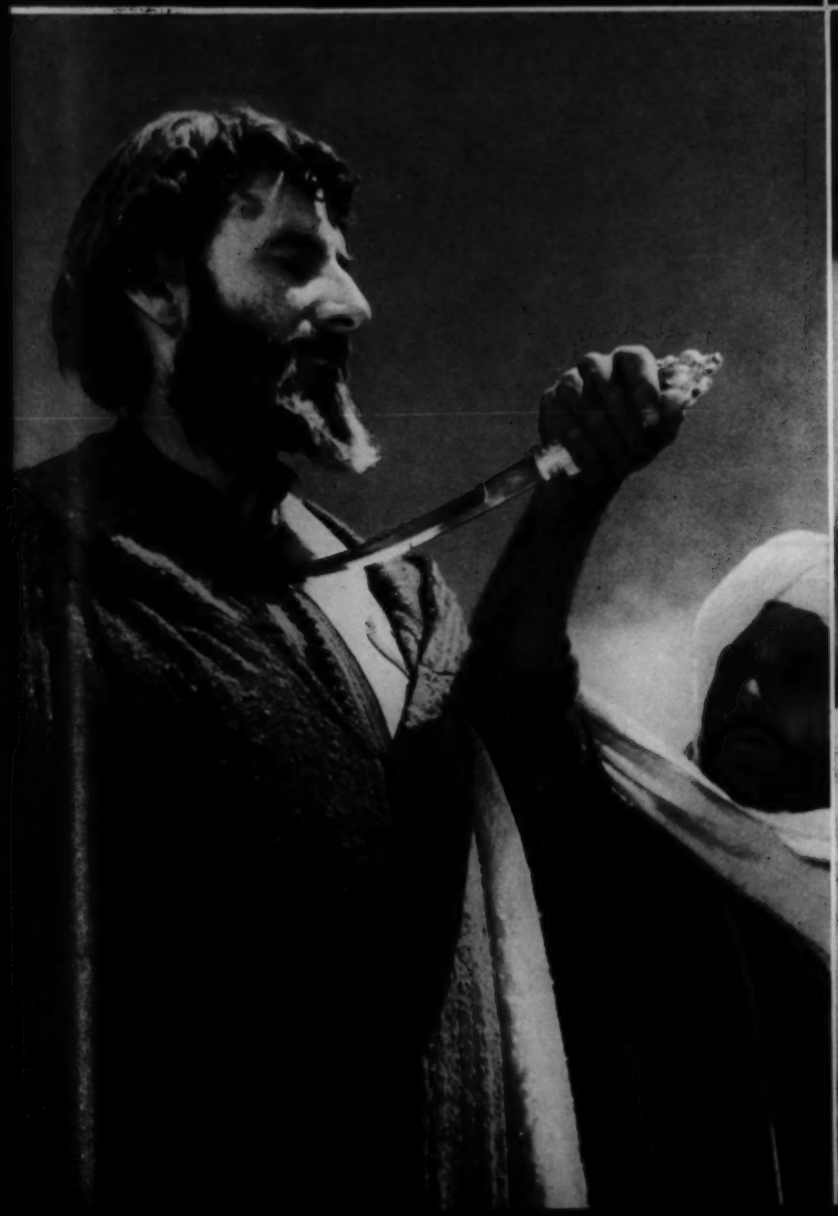
➤

Pierre Fresnay in Saint Vincent (1948)
Georges Rollin in Curé d'Ars (1949)
Robert Darenne in Père Foucault (1947)
Ines Orsini in Maria Goretti (1949)

---

*) Cf. "Religious Themes in the scenarios of the last fifty years", pp. 6-8.





Jennifer Jones in the role of Bernadette of Lourdes

Ingrid Bergman as Joan of Arc

Above: Massimo Girotti as Saint Sebastian (*Fabiola*, by Blasetti, 1949).
Left: Irène Corday as *Sainte Thérèse*.
Right: Luise Rainer devotes her talent to the impersonation of another *Joan of Arc*.

GILBERT DUPÉ
Novelist, film director, Paris.

"DON BOSCO"

MUST LIVE AGAIN ON THE SCREEN

Has the cinema been touched by grace? This seeking for sanctity, a sort of spiritual crisis which is again revealing itself and which is devoutly emphasised in films like Monsieur Vincent, Fabiola, *or* Joan of Arc, *is, at least, quite apart from any religious preoccupation, a work of goodness in contrast to innumerable films which really make one only too willing to believe in the presence of the Devil. A patch of sometimes even heavenly blue relieves the darkness and night, especially when that night is starless. If there be a saint on high charged with the holy guardianship of the seventh art, may he forgive me! The idea which came to me one day of making Don Bosco live again on the screen has nothing to do with any spiritual pilgrimage or work dedicated to the absolution of my sins. Before becoming a saint Don Bosco was a man, a hero, a figure of radiant light. And it is the man who first attracted me as soon as his life was better known to me, the hero of no romantic deed, whose influence, so apparently ordinary, yet lasts for ever in immortal works of protection and salvation.*

A miracle is not necessarily a phenomenon transcending natural laws, it is also the brilliant success of certain undertakings which long, obscure labour builds up without thought of the morrow, for the amazement of the scandal of men. Don Bosco's life is made up of precisely these methodical victories, patiently prepared and truly prodigious not so much because they are such astonishing successes but above all for the genius, inspired of God, who brought them to light and slowly, in spite of every obstacle led them to him. Of these miracles, is not one, the first, God's having chosen, out of all others, for such a mission, one of those who seemed humanly the least prepared to carry it out, one of the humblest of the humble, one of the poorest of the poor? But what would you? At all times it has seemed that shepherdesses and priests have been closer to heaven and that the voice of God makes itself better heard in the solitude of the plains or the silence of high places. Do the angels, the envoys of heaven, perhaps, make themselves more accessible there? One would say that tree, spring, cave or star were their chosen thresholds. These places of grace, do they not, perhaps, await the knees of the saints, of scholars and doctors? But they were lighted, adorned, or hung with blossom for those little souls whose modesty or naïveté would know so well how to find a way to the popular heart. Plum-trees of Saint Joan, little cave open to the waters of the Gave wherein the destiny of Bernadette was swallowed up, harsh and barren plain of Chieri whose only softness was the wind of May or the lamps of evening, you were dedicated in secret to great deeds, and from having seen the trembling of the miraculous pollen and from having been witnesses of a first revelation, you tremble yet and for ever bear witness.

Yes, when still no more than a child, before his tenth birthday, John Bosco already knows that he is to be a priest and is to consecrate his life to lost children. The voices which counselled him, spoke within him, the hands which guided him were the hands of angels, and it was beneath closed eyelids that he received the prophetic warning of the vision which instructed him. But those to whom the child, still frightened by the sound of wings, and by the blazing lights, told it, had no enlightened understanding thereof. Nobody remarked the saint so early inhabiting so young a soul. Only his mother had a presentiment of the truth.

The miracles surrounding this life appear under familiar forms. Who, then was to know them for miracles? Children like himself were unknowingly to trace their first outlines. John Bosco amuses but guides them. By tricks of play, by his bodily skill, the mischief of his humour, he leads them gently towards a new knowledge of God: and grown-ups, without realising it, will follow the same path. But to become what he must become this little peasant must follow another road. Then appears he who is to be the angel of the Lord, the guide and comforter, Don Calosso, who in this mission received his life's reward.

It is thus that the will of the master delegates the servants of his commandments to his elect.

John Bosco was not to lack trials. But he resembles soil made fruitful by the labour of men and of himself. The words of an old priest are, in him, as scattered seeds giving life to the flower which is to become fruit. Thus the child matures, in the midst of trials which, one after the other, are overcome after giving their share of fire. Always there rises up a Saint to bring providential help to him who is to become one. After Don Calosso, Don Cafasso comes to stand beside the predestined one.

John Bosco enters the seminary; six years later, he is a priest, but not in order to be the usual connecting link between Creator and creature, but in order that little children, the poor, the abandoned, as well as those who still know how to pray, may come to him. Those whose hearts have been withered by misery, the fragile flowers as well as the weeds, couch-grass, rye-grass, and even nettles, and these perhaps, with more love than those, draw the good gardener into the untilled fields of the world. At the seminary, John Bosco is to make death speak, when, besought by him, his friend Comollo before expiring solemnly utters in his ears the longed-for message. But behind the terrible voice was that of the Master heard for the first time.

Don Bosco is priest in Turin. The town at that time was growing upon its stones, was ringing itself with factories, was becoming the great industrial and commercial city of Italy. But invisible behind the facade another city, built by want and poverty, was arising, an area bounded by hovels, waste lands, untilled, despairful, cut off from hope.

There live hundreds of children, pariahs of society, a hunger rooted in their stomachs so strong, so savage that it has devoured

Above: Rex Ingram and Henry Polk in *Green Pastures*
Below: A scene of the Passion from Duvivier's *Golgotha*

the very needs of the soul. Tomorrow these will be the army of the wretched, the maddened brigade ready to destroy in disorder the established order which has selfishly forgotten them, ready to rise up against the Church so apparently forgetful of the words of Christ. These gangrenous children bear no resemblance to those whom Don Bosco led in his youth in a healthy countryside. And yet they are youth; the youth he has sworn to protect and to save. And it is for them that he is to exert his entire strength.

In fact, the saint's great work begins there on that terrible, smoke-shadowed plain of Valdocco. Faith will always move mountains. Slowly it raises these innocent dregs, decants and purifies them, gives them life, with bread and with love. Slowly, at first very slowly. There is neither money nor shelter. Nevertheless money, ever cautious, will come, doors will open, stones, in their turn will rise from the ground to become houses, shelters, homes, sanctuaries. It is impossible to describe here in a few lines the scenes that the film will be able to bring to life again. The Master does not spare his servant. Sanctity is a long patience watered with much love. Don Bosco overcomes every trial with an invincible will, he labours night and day, giving way to weaknesses neither of body nor of soul, withstanding attacks of evil that become more savage in proportion as the work grows. The invisible enemy takes advantage too of the lack of understanding or the jealousy of men, makes use of politics and even of the Church, certain members of which are hostile to the apostle come from the people, in good faith suspecting even his orthodoxy. It will need the authority, the intelligence of Pius IX himself to save Don Bosco, to enable him to found the order which will definitively organise the defence of children in

Jacques Mervil
Film critic of "La Croix de Paris."

SANCTITY ON THE SCREEN

The Church does not canonise just anybody. She is mistrustful of certain reputations for sanctity.

And the Church is right.

It is of her mission to be prudent, and nothing can so resemble a true saint as a false one.

And when men speak of a saint, they must — at least they always should — express themselves with the same prudence.

For the simple reason that sanctity is extremely complex, at once a human and a divine reality.

Wherefore literature, the cinema, the theatre, those magnificent media of human expression, will always, when they enter this sacred region, find themselves halted at a certain point by that mystery which illumines the soul of a saint and which is called grace.

* * *

One may then ask whether or no, and within what limits, sanctity can be transferred to the screen.

It rests with the Church to define sanctity, since it is within her forms and subject to her commandments that a man becomes a saint and it is her authority which consecrates him as such.

Sanctity, she tells us, is essentially the state of grace, that is to say, on the one hand, the indwelling of the three persons of the Holy Trinity with the resultant divine conformity of the soul; and, on the other hand, the supernatural activity of the soul, aware through faith of this indwelling and living each day more intensely.

In other words, we are in the realm of the theological virtues, ascientifically uncontrollable realm, neither experimental nor quantitive: consequently, sanctity in its constituent elements, is in no sense visual.

Nevertheless sanctity manifests itself visibly, palpably, for saints are men, and their actions have sensual dimensions. If they have to express their faith, hope, or charity, they do so in a visible manner. Their trials, adventures, sufferings, bearing, are like the matter, let us say, the flesh, in which becomes incarnate the invisible, supernatural life of their theological virtues.

Which, in conclusion, implies that any study of sanctity will be but the sign, the symbol, of that reality which surpasses it, even if it be an exact translation of that reality's manifestations. A work of this order of idea will be really beautiful and truthful only in proportion to its power of suggesting and making felt the transcendance of the subject over men and events.

I will add this further remark. Of the manifestations, the deeds and gestures observed of a saint, all have not the same value, many have nothing to do with sanctity.

The temperament, external bearing, of a man — saint or no — depend partly on his health, his physical and psychological constitution. One will bend his head, another will sigh, a third, perhaps, will be more sparing of gesture.

Consequently, the spiritual film which rightly aims at surpassing the "pious" film to translate the Christian dialectic of a soul upon its journey to God, should be infinitely careful to avoid taking appearances for reality.

the world. The Salesians, first born in the mind of Don Bosco and placed under the patronage of St. Francis de Sales, are born again thanks to the will of the great pontiff.

Yes, miracles succeed each other around Don Bosco, born like the roses in the hands of Saint Elizabeth. And only today can they be given that name.

The greatest is not to be looked for among the children saved, the wild beasts subdued, the multiplied hosts, the prophecies strange and fulfilled, the persecution overcome, but in the dazzling, superhuman triumphant success of the saint. If this success must be given a name let us call it: charity. But a Charity which is not content with giving bread. By feeding bodies only charity would have been doing no more than to make men of young starvelings, but she educated and reared them in such a way that all were able to face life armed professionally and morally. Don Bosco's great idea is to have united instruction and education and to have made both serve the rehabilitation of souls. In this sense the saint is a modern apostle, making use of every material technique in order to support the spiritual. Pre-eminently he had the social sense. When he drew his last breath, Salesians by the thousand covered the earth, carrying on his task.

Seen as it must be seen, the life of Don Bosco — today Saint John Bosco — seems like a beautiful legend wherein everything is scaled to the measure of man and is everywhere woven with marvellous threads. This man, yes, this saint, is of our own times. Barely a century separates us from him. He was a true hero, not simply heroic in goodness. Raised above us among the noblest figures of humanity, Saint John Bosco is one of those holy braziers which warm the world and will never expire.

When so many other insignificant people encumber or pollute the screen, it would, I think, be good to bring to life again, in the second life of the cinema, the figure of this astonishing man, not with any naïve, religious-propagandist aim, but as a form of homage to greatness and worth, in order to make known that our age, which seems to have so many reasons to despair, possesses, like so many others, its geniuses and its genuine saints, and in order also to prove that a son of God worthy of that name can bring as much happiness to the screen as a popular star.

I hope to achieve this successfully by carrying out the task with much humility and love, striving to be not too unworthy of him who received, in the morning of his life, in the depths of the silence of the night. an astonishing and miraculous message.

Emmanuel FLIPO S.J.
from the "Centrale Catholique du Cinéma", Paris

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

OF THE CINEMATOGRAPHER

The title of this article may provoke a smile . . . What can spirituality have to do with the hundred and one trades belonging to the Cinema? Is not the juxtaposition of these two words an arbitrary choice rather like that which dictates film titles and which depends rather on publicity technique than on the religious aspect? The Christian cineaste, however, may have a real spiritual life and nourish his religious thought with the riches of one of the schools of spirituality which have flourished through the centuries, but at first sight it does not appear that his calling must leave a deep impression on his interior life of faith as a disciple of Christ.

A closer scrutiny of the question should be made at this epoch where *professional life* is the essential, if not exclusive, occupation of human beings. If we claim that Christ is the centre of the life of the world and the solution of all its problems, it would be astonishing that we could set this exacting professional life apart from our spiritual life, and that as a good parishioner, husband and father of a Christian family we should not in some way be able to bring the spirit of Christ into our work as cineaste.

Without doubt we bring this spirit of Christ to bear in our campaigns to purify the cinema, national and international, and in some other article it might be suitably discussed how this so desirable *Catholic Action* could transform one's personal interior life and the life of our intelligence and of our heart; our conception of the world and of life, even our relations with God, would not thereby be altered.

But all that which is, properly speaking, a "spirituality" can also be maintained, nourished and developed in an original way by giving fuller heed to the deep meaning of the "Seventh Art". It has been called the "Devil's Cinema", but without troubling to discuss this glib label we shall more modestly seek to discover the place that Pro-

vidence has awarded to the moving picture art in the plan of creation and of grace.

The recent studies of Filmology allow us to cross the threshold separating profane technique from religious thought. Pursuing the essence of the Cinema, Cohen-Séat traces an analogy with other languages which translate man's ideas into words. But very soon he points out that pictures are scarcely translations, since they imprint themselves directly on our consciousness without the intermediary of an abstract universal concept. According to Raymond Bayer, "we are here at the source, as if in the laboratory, of intuitive thought". Let us round off the comparison of the Cinema with conventional languages by another analogy: the Cinema, concludes Cohen-Séat, is a *symbolism*. To get an idea realised or win sympathy for a sentiment it does not make speeches, it shows this idea or this sentiment as a "picture". In this context the filmologue employs a word almost exclusively religious: the film is a "parable", an idea expressed in poetical form lending itself to all the fantasies of imagination of a cinematographic creator (in the vocabulary of Cohen-Séat one must say "filmistic"); the social point about the Cinema is precisely the reception by a whole public of ideas and sentiments which are communicated to it in the form of a parable.

Poetry in itself is in some way divine, but this particular form of poetry we call parable is a language which God favours, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto . . . a drachma, a sheep, a sower, a King, a father . . ." Thus speaks God when He speaks of God. Thence one can gather as an immediate consequence that the *religious Cinema,* like other forms of religious parable, is an eminent means of spreading the knowledge of God, often better adapted than discursive and logically reasoned methods. "To contemplate is to possess", and the religious Cinema, instead of reasoning about God, exhibits the things of God. It can, thus, make "the heart feel God", as says Pascal; and we understand how Abel Gance, composing the technical set-up of his "DIVINE TRAGEDY", claims as insignia of nobility of the film that curious text of this same Pascal describing Our Lord's Passion in a series of pictures, numbered like cinematographic reels.

But the inferences of parabolic language in the Cinema go far beyond religious films. In a celebrated thesis, Abbe Brémond once compared "PRAYER AND POETRY", conferring on both the power to attain to God, *Prayer* remaining in contact with the Beyond without being able to express the ineffable, *Poetry* seeking to crystallise in words its grasp of the divine and forced to abandon God in order to speak of Him on earth. Would it be too pretentious to accord the Cinema an *intermediary place:* by the magic of images, by its power of escape from the real — or rather beyond the real — which it offers, it can put us into *ineffable communication* with the Divine hiding behind things, with the Creator hiding behind His creatures, with the Life-Giver of the Universe, the Sepreme Being from Whom proceed Beauty, Truth, Justice, disinterested Love, He Whom we call Our Father.

Already a lovely landscape viewed from the sea or from the mountains puts us in the presence of the divine greatness and wisdom. It may be that in the Cinema these same prospects, poetically transposed, can be an even more expressive and holy parable. A film which brings home Justice and Truth to a public enthralled by the poetry of such scenes, may it not become a parable of that eternal Justice and Truth which is God? Christ did little else in relating His parables — little familiar ordinary stories which He said were like unto the Kingdom of God. "The Kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat . . ." (Matt. XIII, 24, 25). Is not that a film-story, suited to a rural public as was that of Galilee, with real characters, concise dialogue, the lure of dramatic situations based on "An Idea of Jesus Christ"? The story is worldly to the end, but carries a *supernatural* lesson; it is "like unto the Kingdom of heaven" and every film which unfolds *poetically* a true and healthy situation can likewise speak to us of God.

The Cinema, it is true, is *rarely* this work of art in its pure state, this picturing of situations completely true and wholesome; and the escape which it offers its public is more often downwards than upwards; a fact which deceived Jean Epstein into dedicating this modern temple to the devil. Yet it suffices that a poetic escape towards God is *possible* in order that the Cinema be worthy of special interest and that the cineaste be proud of an art which proclaims its divine origin. Moreover, and inversely, it is very seldom that at some *particular moment* in its long succession of scenes and sequences a film does not give the beneficial impression of raising us above ourselves, this sensation, almost physical, that we are fallen gods nostalgic for heaven.

Hence he who labours at such a work of art, whilst "recreating" his brothers "re-creates" the universe for them — to quote a pun borrowed from film philosophers — and — may we add — he renews in his puny way the great creative

gesture of God: he can restore the world to its original purity and bathe an audience in the ambiance of an earthly paradise, harmonious, generous and sublime.

And so the cineaste may find many opportunities for *contact with God* in the course of his professional life: it may be in causing this poetic emotion which will make of the film or sequence of the film he works on a parable of the Kingdom of God.

Let it be noted that what I have said so far of the rehabilitation of the Cinema is rather a hope for the future than unreserved praise of present-day films.

Many Christian-spirited cineastes are needed if the Cinema is to "sing the glory of God". Yet it seems, one may think, that the cineaste who tries to develop his spiritual life need only follow the impulse of his soul to perceive that *all here below* is but a symbol and parable of God. The picture technician will easily recognise in the Scriptures the doctrine which teaches that the Creator shows Himself in *all* creation. Truly the invisible perfections of God become visible — as it were — when we admire them *in His works*. (St. Paul, Rom. I, 20). The humblest collaborator in a cinematographic team engaged in portraying human life in picture will recollect that at the beginning of the Bible it is written that God made man to His Own Image and Likeness (Gen. I, 26) and will try to see God *in all humanity*.

Furthermore he will realise that on earth there are privileged images of God: "God, Who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spoke in times past to the fathers by the *prophets*" — and prophetic teaching made use much more of images than of words — "In these days, hath spoken to us by *His Son* . . . the brightness of His glory and the figure of His substance". (Heb. I, 1—3). He is the image of the invisible God . . . "Because in Him, it hath well pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell" (Col. I, 19).

This fundamental idea that "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son Who is in the bosom of the Father" (St. John, I, 18) and that "in the incarnate Christ we have seen the glory of God", may give to the "seeker after images" the unquenchable desire to seek and to find God in Christ and in *all the "signs"* of God which Jesus has left us.

He will find Him through the *seven privileged signs* which we call the Sacraments, where the operations of God are accomplished by means of signs which function — moving images — flowing water, oil which anoints, bread which nourishes.

He will find Him in the Church "like a sign raised above nations" (Vatican Council) showing him through new images suited to each century the eternal face of Christ. He will find Him in the *Liturgy* of the Church which enacts the mysteries of Christ and renews each day on every altar the death and the resurrection of Our Lord.

All that constitutes a "spirituality of the Incarnation", which, having once recognised God under the appearance of man, tries to see Him through the veil of all profane things, and so follows the apostolic way, "loving God in all creatures and all creatures in God" (St. Ignatius).

The cineaste who will choose this road cannot stop short until he proves in himself what St. Paul hinted to the Christians of Corinth (II, iii, 18) "But we all, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, *are transformed into the same image* from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."

"LE RIRE"

(Laughter)

In homage to Bergson

PART OF AN ORIGINAL SCENARIO
BY
MAURICE BESSY AND LO DUCA

The staircase of a middleclass block of flats. A young woman climbs the stairs in haste, she seems agitated and not completely under self-control. She reaches a landing with two similar doors, and rings the bell of one of them. The door opens immediately and a young valet appears. Before he can open his mouth, the young woman brushes him aside and enters the hall of the flat.

SUZY — Don't get in my way, I've an appointment.

She opens a door and slams it behind her in the face of the aggrieved valet.

ALEXANDRE — Another crackpot !

Suzy, not a whit less feverishly, enters a severely furnished study. One side of the room is lined with bookshelves. The light of a big window is filtered by a sun-blind. A flower-study hangs on one wall. Behind a severe and massive desk, decorated with a lamp and a bust, sits a man of forty, wearing a wing-collar and carefully-cut clothes, who regards the unexpected visitor with benevolent irony.

Before he can speak, Suzy has seated herself in an armchair and begun to talk vehemently, rising to her feet and sitting down again in her excitement. The man listens impassively, even approvingly. Suzy is young, elegant and attractive, and her picture hat faithfully follows every feverish movement of her head. She is continually replacing it in position, but as regularly the hat slips out of place.

SUZY— I'm very well, and so are you, thanks.... You can guess why I'm here. We've reached a crisis, acute and incurable. Judge for yourself: we've been married three years, apparently very happily.... We could have children.... No serious reason to quarrel, but no possibility of happiness. *My husband never laughs.* I've tried everything, the necessary and the unnecessary. I have insisted: he has persisted. I'm sure he is doing it on purpose. I don't ask him to laugh all the time, but a little smile now and again, it's not terrible. Think of a farmyard which never heard a cock crow !

With a gesture Dr Duchemin interrupts her:

DUCHEMIN — But....

SUZY — It is not a question of but.... You don't waste your youth every day with a neurasthenic.

With an amused air, the doctor listens without trying to interrupt, but at last he decides to put in a word:

DUCHEMIN — A cure is possible....

SUZY — So is death.... But I don't want to die. My patience is at an end. My decision is irrevocable. My salvation depends on you. With you there's no time lost, I know. We must act quickly.

DUCHEMIN — I'll do my best to satisfy you, but it's impossible to fix a time-limit in advance, even approximately. A month.. perhaps a year, it depends on you both.

SUZY — I don't know if I can hold out a week longer.

DUCHEMIN — Have courage, young lady, your husband is in good hands.

SUZY — Don't be too gentle with him.

DUCHEMIN — I'll see.When will you bring him to see me ?

Suzy makes a gesture of impatience.

SUZY — You can arrange it with his lawyer. So long as the separation is pronounced quickly.

DUCHEMIN *(surprised)* — What separation ?

SUZY — My separation.

Duchemin, intrigued, goes over to Suzy and feels her pulse.

SUZY — I'm perfectly calm. I've thought it out. There's only one solution.... a separation. I can rely on you, *Maître*....

DUCHEMIN — *Doctor.* Doctor Duchemin.

SUZY — What! You aren't Maître Olivier ?

SUZY — Maître Olivier, a fine lawyer incidentally, lives in the flat opposite.

SUZY — I mistook the door. How annoying.... now I have to start over again.

And Suzy bursts into a peal of laughter, at first out of nervousness, and then out of relief. Duchemin laughs too. Suzy gets up to go:

SUZY — Excuse me, Doctor.... It's not your science that can help me.

DUCHEMIN — How do you know ? I'm a specialist in nervous ailments, and from what you tell me, your husband's case is more medical than legal.

Suzy looks interested, sits down again, adjusts her hat and prepares to listen.

DUCHEMIN — You see that the slightest mistake, a confusion of doors can make one laugh. Laughter is always latent in us. Even the gravest circumstances can result in laughter if it is provoked by the unexpected.

SUZY — It's true about everyone except my husband.

DUCHEMIN — But he's like any other man.

SUZY — I think so.

DUCHEMIN — Of course he is. Then he's no exception to the rule. Rabelais has reminded us of the old proverb: "To laugh is natural to man."

SUZY — Then my husband must be a monster.

DUCHEMIN — No more so than a young man who is bald, a water-drinker with liver-trouble, or a lawyer who stammers... We know all the mechanics of laughter.... I'll show you.

Duchemin gets up and invites Suzy to follow him into his laboratory, of which the door is open. At the same time he picks up his pipe and uses it to give emphasis to his speech.

DUCHEMIN — Enter the sanctum. Here reigns the god of laughter who prevented you from confiding your misfortunes to my neighbour. I can imagine him arranging the break-up of your marriage for a fat fee, with a simulated adultery at each instalment. That's what is called the spirit of the law.

SUZY — Don't tell me you can preserve laughter in spirits.

DUCHEMIN — The incitements to laughter are all around us....

SUZY — After three years of hoping, I begin to doubt. My husband *laugh?* What a miracle !

DUCHEMIN — We only have to discover in him the reflex which releases the spring of laughter, common to all men.

They reach the middle of the laboratory, and Duchemin shows a big blackboard on which are outlined the various mechanics of laughter.

LAUGHTER

To laugh is natural to man
RABELAIS

ergo :
HOMO, ANIMAL RIDENS

1. CHEMICAL : Laughing Gas
2. MECHANICAL : Tickling

PSYCHOLOGICAL : The laughter of others ('Laughter is communicative")

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL

- **I. STIFFNESS** ("Mécanique plaquée sur du vivant" Bergson). — *Human imitation of the machine*
- **II. INERTIA** ("Vitesse acquise" Bergson). *Action continued beyond logical limits*
- **III. ACCELERATION** (Excess of suppleness) — *Mechanical imitation of living movement*

"Laughter comes out of expectancy which ends in nothing" KANT).

2*

A. TENSION (Uneasiness)

DEGRADATION 1*

EXAGGERATION

EXULTATION

B. RELAXATION (Reassurance)

α. AUDIBLE

- SATIRE
  - HUMOUR : The positive pretence *[The imperfect shown as perfect]*
  - IRONY : The negative pretence *[The perfect shown as really imperfect]*
- SOUND EFFECT
  - DISCORD
  - REFRAIN

β. VISUAL

- FORMS
  - CONTRAST
  - ANALOGY :
    - Repetition
    - Resemblance *("Two similar faces, which seen separately do not excite laughter, excite it when seen together, by their resemblance" Pascal).*
    - *Imitation*
  - DEFORMATION :
    - Caricature : *Exaggeration of type. Technique of disproportion,*
    - Disguise
- GESTURES
  - IMMOBILITY
  - MOVEMENT { ONE WAY OR REVERSIBLE } DECALAGE
  - DEFORMATION ;

γ. AUDIBLE-VISUAL

- SITUATIONS
  - REPETITION *("The jack-in-the-box")*
  - COMPLICITY *("The puppet")*
  - SUITE *("Snowball or Card Castle"*
  - DECALAGE { DISTRACTION, STIFFNESS, INADAPTABILITY }
- CHARACTERS
  - LOGICAL
  - ANTI-LOGICAL
  - ILLOGICAL
- SPECTACLES
  - THEATRE : { COMEDY, COMIC OPERA, VAUDEVILLE, FARCE, PANTOMIME }
  - CIRCUS
  - MUSIC-HALL
  - CABARET
  - CINEMA

MEANS
- SCATOLOGY
- PUNS, PLAY ON WORDS
- SATIRE { Humour, Irony }
- SURPRISE

FORMULAE
- REPETITION
- INVERSION
- INTROVERSION
- or
- MISUNDERSTANDING

- SCATOLOGICAL
- PUNNING (double meaning)
- PLAY ON WORDS (double meaning for the same words)

1* Alexandre Brain.
2* "Laughter is a physiological phenomenon of tension-relaxation, psychologically concomitant to a complex uneasiness-reassurance" Lucien Fabre.

SUZY — It's a regular puzzle.

Duchemin leads her to a table on which are seen, among other psycho-physiological instruments, a jack-in-the-box, a puppet on strings, hanging from a scaffold, and a card-castle under a glass globe (Bergson).

DUCHEMIN — Here are our working tools, our instruments for studying the causes of laughter. You will see them in use during your husband's treatment.

He takes Suzy back to his study, saying:

DUCHEMIN — See this bust.... look at this pipe. They are quite independent of each other, quite harmless. But if I place the pipe between the lips of Hippocrates, the result is amusing.

He does so, and the pipe is left in the marble mouth of the bust.

SUZY — But it's the pipe that's funny. In the mouth of a pretty woman, the result would be the same.

DUCHEMIN — Certainly, but the pipe is only the means. The comic effect comes from contrast. You react to the contrast more or less according to your state of mind.

Duchemin takes a cigarette-box from his desk.

DUCHEMIN — A cigarette?

Suzy puts out her hand, the box opens and a long serpent-like cigarette appears. Suzy pretends to be frightened.

SUZY — I don't see what that kind of joke has to do with medicine.

DUCHEMIN — It's not a very good joke, but it always succeeds. One day it relieved the melancholy of a noble lord. You see, it takes little to cause a laugh.

SUZY — Yes, but I like to laugh. I'm an easy subject. I'd like to see you try it on my husband.

DUCHEMIN — His case interests me, I already see how to treat it. But permit me to offer you a real cigarette.

The doctor offers his case, and Suzy takes a cigarette. The doctor also takes one and takes out his lighter, but it does not work. After vainly searching for a match, he rings the bell.

DUCHEMIN — Here comes a light.

Alexandre enters. Duchemin shows him his cigarette and says:

DUCHEMIN — Alexandre, a match!

Alexandre takes a box of matches from his pocket, shakes it and says:

ALEXANDRE — They are good ones, pre-war....

SUZY — Which war?

Alexandre strikes one match, a second, a third....

DUCHEMIN — The war of 1870.

Alexandre, annoyed, continues to strike matches which do not light. The effect of repetition causes Suzy to smile. Alexandre remains imperturbable, and says merely:

ALEXANDRE — The air is damp.

Duchemin turns to Suzy:

DUCHEMIN — The matches don't light, but don't think Alexandre prefers this kind. It is merely an accident that allows us to verify the law of series. Here is an unexpected and classical effect of repetition. It would have delighted a producer of vaudevilles.

Alexandre has come to the end of the box. He takes the last match.

ALEXANDRE — The last one. I'm going to try my trick.

He raises his foot to strike the match on his boot-sole. He strikes it, loses his balance, catches at the curtain to prevent falling. The curtain yields, bringing with it a curtain-rod which knocks over a lampshade, and this brings down with it a neat pile of files. In a few seconds we witness a cataclysm of various objects. Suzy laughs and says:

SUZY — It's a fine trick.

DUCHEMIN *(slightly acidly)* — You think so?

When things have stopped falling, Alexandre, still dignified, is seen sitting on the floor, draped in the curtain. He gets up, offers Suzy the match, which he has succeeded in keeping alight. Suzy has difficulty in lighting her cigarette, since she is convulsed with laughter.

SUZY — You scared me.

Alexandre looks contrite. Duchemin, who still does not laugh, lights his own cigarette with a disapproving air and comments:

DUCHEMIN — One often laughs at someone else's expense. At this moment, the joke is against me. I do not blame you; laughter is always legitimate; what is more, it does good, it shakes up the nervous centres. We doctors say that laughing is caused by spasmodic contractions of the diaphragm, by the closing of the glottis and by interpulmonary tension....

Alexandre, who meanwhile has been putting the room in order, says sententiously:

ALEXANDRE — Common people call it "laughing a belly-ful."

Suzy sits back comfortably in the armchair, tilts her hat back, and puffing out a cloud of smoke, says:

SUZY — I call it loosening up one's lights.

Alexandre has replaced the fallen files, and the doctor, looking at Suzy with satisfaction, says:

DUCHEMIN — I can see you have calmed down. When you came in you were aggressive, emotional, upset. Laughter has had rapid results.

SUZY *(reflectively)* — It's a pity that a reason for laughing is always necessary.

Duchemin goes towards a cupboard, saying:

DUCHEMIN — Just now you mentioned laughter preserved in a jar, like jam. Well, here it is....

He uncorks the bottle and offers it to Suzy to smell. Her face contracts in artificial laughter, which subsides after a few moments.

SUZY — What are you trying to do? Is it a drug ?

DUCHEMIN — A drug if you like. It's nitrous oxide, better known as laughing gas.

SUZY — — It lives up to its name.

DUCHEMIN — It's the only chemical method known for producing laughter. Naturally it is not often used, but it exists..

SUSY — It should be distributed in the theatres which show so-called amusing plays.

Alexandre, having finished cleaning-up, goes towards the door. Duchemin who has been watching him furtively, says in a low voice:

DUCHEMIN — There is also a mechanical method for causing laughter....

With a gesture he indicates his intention of tickling Alexandre.

DUCHEMIN — It is *tickling*....

Alexandre laughs nervously and wriggles. He continues to laugh, as the doctor adds:

DUCHEMIN — This laugh you hear, this fine hearty laugh, can also be photographed. You don't believe it? Well, you will see....

Extending his arm towards the lefthand edge of the screen, the doctor pulls the sound-track into the picture. The modulations in the laughter of the valet may thus be seen; the intonations of his voice having been chosen so as to create the greatest diversity in the waves recorded on the sound-track. As the three persons on the lefthand side of the screen regard this "photograph" of Alexandre's laugh, Suzy bursts out laughing, and her shrill and silvery tones create quite a different effect on the sound track.

DUCHEMIN — There's *your* laugh, Madame, as young and light-hearted as yourself. Now it's my turn.

Duchemin bursts into the a loud laugh of a grand opera bass, and its recorded image is quite different from the two previously shown. Duchemin touches the sound-track and it disappears from the picture as if pulled by a spring. The doctor turns his back on the lefthand side of the screen.

DUCHEMIN — Now you know what laughter is as well as I do. We have now only to make your husband laugh. Laughter, don't forget, is communicative....

He resumes his grave professional manner:

DUCHEMIN — There are specialists in laughter — the humorists, the clowns and the doctors. We try to produce it by psycho-physiological methods. If your husband does not put up a psychological resistance, we shall cure him. But I need your assistance. What do you think of a provincial cousin coming to stay with you? Naturally I must meet him without his suspecting who I am....

As he speaks, Duchemin plays with the two cigarette-boxes on his desk. He opens one of them:

DUCHEMIN — ....the better to obtain the effects of surprise.

As he says this, the serpent-cigarette jumps in his face. Duchemin recoils. Suzy laughs.

DUCHEMIN — We are agreed about the cousin? You can introduce me as a relative, describing me, say, as a provincial school-teacher.

Agostino GEMELLI, O. F. M.
President of the Pontifical Academy of Science
Rector of the Sacred Heart University in Milan

Cinema and psychology

The reader must not allow himself to be misled by the title of this article. I am not proposing to do what many have already done, namely to make an analysis of the psychological process of film perception. What I propose to examine is something entirely different. Writing for a cinematographic review sponsored by Catholics, it seems to me that the most important question is: What is the reason for the interest aroused by films ? (1)

Today the cinema has become such a confirmed habit with us that many people are asking themselves what influence it will have on our lives. The replies given to this question vary considerably.

According to some, the modern man changes his life, his manners, his way of dressing and of

(1) I have written on other live problems in the article La Filmologia: Una Nuova Scienza, VITA E PENSIERO April 1948.

acting, his tastes, even his way of speech, in imitating his particular screen favourites in his whole general behaviour. Thus, they say, the cinema exercises a great influence on the modern man, even to the extent of imposing upon him a definite habit of life and behaviour. This is not the moment to say whether that takes place consciously or not.

There are those, on the other hand, who draw attention to the fact that those engaged in producing films strive to construct them in such a way as to interest a growing number of social classes, while at the same time they choose subjects, characters, scenes which will appeal to the great majority. They recognise that there is a close relation between society of today and the cinema; but in this view the current flows in an opposite direction to that indicated by those who hold the first opinion outlined above. Here, it is maintained, it is society that demands, through the producers and directors, films which cater for the taste and tendencies of today, or of a certain kind of society.

Others again, declare that the reality of the film is not that which is portrayed by the pictures as they succeed each other on the screen; they believe that each person sees, reads, interprets what is shown by introducing his own *ego* into it. Thus, if we want to indicate the true character of the cinema, we cannot do this in terms of the reality of the films themselves, but must do it in terms of a projection of our own interests, our inclinations and our affections into the film presented to us. Thus we become emotionally affected by a particular episode or story, or by particular characters in a film in so far as we recognise in them the satisfaction of our own aspirations and inclinations. Above all it must be recognised that the spectator sees realised for him in the film all that the subconscious life of his own *ego* has desired to realise. In these circumstances the film is only an occasion, a means, a help to the development of the psychological activity of the spectator, a reflection of his subconscious; the film thus provokes in us an activity which in many ways is similar to that of dreams.

Here, then, we have three ways of considering and weighing the relationship between the film and the spectator.

It cannot be denied that there are grounds for accepting any one of these interpretations. Many who have sought to analyse the film and its action and to estimate the character of the cinema, have well-founded reasons for adopting one or other of these points of view. The names of the Russian Poudowkin, of the Frenchmen Cohen-Séat, Allendy, Zazzo, Wallon and Merleau-Ponty, of the Belgian Michotte, of the German Müller-Freienfels, of the Italians Ponzo, Fulchignoni (2) will be remembered by the reader as those who have most deeply gone into the question of these different view-points, in an endeavour to weigh the various aspects of the cinema.

But it is always the same problem that underlies these interpretations, namely why or in what way are films interesting? If the cinema has entered so deeply into modern life, whatever opinion may be held as to the way in which films actually produce their effect, the point of importance is to determine the reasons for this universal and unflagging interest, which is far greater than that shown in the theatre, or in music or in any other kind of entertainment. It is very important for us Catholics to determine what are the motives of this interest, because thus we shall have a true indication of what must be done to make the interest fruitful for good and to prevent it from becoming a source of evil.

I examined this question already as long ago as 1928 (3) and although I must confirm the conclusions I arrived at then, I have to recognise at the same time that they are incomplete and insufficient. The technique of the cinema of those days was very different from that of today (that was in the days of the silent film). I wrote then that the interest of a film is similar to that of a dream or, more precisely, during the projection of a film the spectator becomes immersed in a state very like that in which he finds himself in a dream, and the psychological explanation of our attitude during a film demonstrates that we are behaving as in a dream state; the non-resistance of an *ego*, the lessening of our critical faculties, the projection of our interests; and above all I laid stress on this observation, that we see ourselves in the sequences (this will vary from film to film) and are "caught up" in the happenings that are being portrayed.

In the following pages I shall say how, according to my way of thinking, the problem is to be considered today.

A first observation seems obvious to us.

If we consider the various films, we are struck by the fact that those which please and interest

---

(2) Fulchignoni has given, in an interesting article in BIANCO E NERO (Nov. 1948) an exhaustive review of these various points of view.

(3) Intérêt des projections cinématographiques — "JOURNAL DE PSYCHOLOGIE NORMALE ET PATHOLOGIQUE" 1928.

the most are the ones in which the psychological analysis of the subjects portrayed or of the events that take place before us is presupposed but is not made apparent. To be more precise, I do not say that the psychological analysis is not there, that the director has not made it, but he has used his skill in not making it apparent, and this by means of expedients which will vary from one case to another. The psychological art of the director consists precisely in putting living persons before the spectator. These characters act, speak and behave in such a way that they are not only made *present* to the spectators but are, as it were, *imposed* on him. At the same time the spectator does not have so much the impression of something seen, of an environment, of people, to which he feels a stranger, but rather of a reality which he has himself lived. To attain this end the art of the director must be that of his own time. The film gives us the impression of space; but that is not what claims the interest; it presents things and men in the actual present. The spectator is not, as he is in a theatre, outside what is happening or is represented; he is present and follows the sequence of events with the feeling of being present at them. For example, at a certain moment in a film sequence an empty room is shown; on a table or a chair is an object which, by an easy symbolism, lets the spectator know that a certain person (one whom he has already seen and whose character, interests and aspirations are known to him) has been in that room and has performed some action there, either good or bad (for the moment it is of no importance which), an action which has its proper place in a series of happenings known to the spectator but unknown to the actors; this action explains the whole series. For example a letter or something left behind, these are not just things, they have a meaning, or at least they induce the spectator to give a meaning to their presence. Thus we have a room, that is a space, but it is space instinct with time; a certain person has been in that room for some special purpose, to accomplish something, and that done has gone out. We know this but the other characters in the film do not; they act without this knowledge. Thus in a film, things are not dead things; each has its own significant moment. It would be easy to multiply these instances and by their means to show that a film relates an event by the very inaction of it. Neither painting nor sculpture nor poem nor novel can do as much.

There is one point of particular importance which gives occasion for a second observation.

In depicting some happening, a film leaves us free to interpret, to understand it, to discover its value as well as its meaning. The director is not there to tell us what is going on. The difference between the early sound film and the modern film (by modern I mean steeped in psychology) lies in the fact that in the former the sound told us exactly what we were supposed to see. The director was therefore to tell us through the words of the actors, what we were supposed to see. In the sound film of today there are sequences in which there is only a single sound — a clock whose slow tick we hear, the splash of a fountain, the banging of a door, etc. The modern director has learned this psychological art to help us discover the meaning and development of what is happening by means of some trifle, perhaps just a noise. Think of the horror of foreign sound films with superimposed sub-titles of phrases supposed to be spoken by some character. This is done to help spectators who don't understand the original language of the sound track. In the modern film the spectator is given so much freedom of interpretation as to be left in ambiguity. It is this freedom of interpretation of the successive happenings that keeps the interest alive. The spectator finds himself drawn to take part in the action of the film, to play a role, to live it himself, just as in real life we live the happenings in which we actually take part. The spectator does not play a purely passive part, as he does during slide projections which are shown one after the other, he even gets so far as to forget that what he is seeing on the screen is the action of a film. He perceives so little difference between the reality of the film and that of everyday life that there is no need for the picture to give a sense of depth or to put things in their true perspective; it is necessary for things, man, background, to be in their proper colours. The spectator takes so little notice of the want of depth or colour that one wonders whether the attempt to obtain stereoscopic pictures would be crowned with success, whether they will help to increase interest in film projection, or whether they will not rather end by upsetting film perception.

For film perception it is important that the spectator should always have before his eyes some action in which he is himself involved, which he has to live as he lives an action in real life; that is to say he has to be kept in a state of tension, of uncertainty, of suffering or joy, as in every human action. The characters are not presented to the spectator as if each of them were wearing a label giving their name and what they are going to say. The spectator must understand who they

are as this one or that, with such and such a disposition, playing such and such a part; he must penetrate the life of each one; he must understand the significance of what they do; he must also visualise what is not actually shown on the screen; he must live with them in their past and project himself with them into their future, a future which has already been revealed to him by a gesture, a situation, a material object.

It is therefore characteristic of the cinema to leave complete freedom to the spectator to interpret the action he is looking at and to suffer or rejoice over what he knows will happen shortly and waits to see brought about in the sequences to follow.

Of course, at the beginning of a film the spectator so far knows nothing. He knows nothing of the characters nor of their world, nothing of their relationships with other men nor of their environment. The art of the director at the beginning of a film is to immerse the spectator gradually, as opportunity offers, without his being conscious of it, in the action which is taking place in circumstances already determined upon. He must be led, without being aware of it, to know the characters of the various people concerned; he must be made to understand what he has not been actually told by anyone, nor will be told, about each one's past or environment and yet which has an important bearing on the present. There comes a moment in the film when the action of the characters takes hold of the spectator· from then on he lives with them in their surround· ings, takes part in their lives, their sorrows and their joys. All this ground has already been covered in my article mentioned above in which I spoke of the great likeness there is between the film situation and the dream state.

The greater the ability of the director, the more rapidly and profoundly will he be able to introduce into the milieu he portrays and into the men whom he sets to act therein a significant quality which will be so near to reality as to make the spectator forget himself and merge his own life in that presented to him by filmic science.

Much has been written on the relationship between psychology and the film, and on the character of reality which a film should possess. The recommendations offered therein are valid upon one understanding and upon one condition; the spectator must be able to analyse, without being conscious of doing so, what is taking place on the screen so that he may reach a synthesis. It is therefore impossible to say: This film is good; this film is interesting; that film is not good; that one not interesting. A film is good, and therefore interesting, if it enables the spectator to live it himself, to interpret the characters, to suffer, to enjoy, in other words to join in the action of the film he is being shown. Thus a film which is interesting for one of my degree of culture, and for the orientation of that culture, is interesting, granted my tastes, my inclinations and my conception of life; but perhaps it may be of much less interest, or else unacceptable or even absurd, to other spectators.

This understanding of the significance of a film depends upon an instant, a trifle. One of the characters in the film makes some gesture which it is supposed the other characters do not see (the director sees to it that this is so). I hear a noise which tells me that some action is taking place (footsteps going upstairs, the opening of a door or a window) which the others do not hear. But this gesture, this opened window, the sound of steps going up or down stairs, suffice to make me understand, or at least they influence me towards an interpretation which I am induced to make, (film action is not like still projection which gives me an action whose meaning and value are picture in static form); thus I project outside myself into this character, these surroundings, this action, my own feelings, my inclinations, my desires, in a word my *ego* and especially my *subconscious ego*.

In a word, where film is concerned it is the spectator who lives and acts; the value of a film lies in so arranging the conditions that this effect is produced. If this is lacking all interest is lacking.

These considerations allow us to say that the film is far more than the picture that composes it. Much has been written, and from varying angles, on the value of the cinematograph picture. A film on the screen is not a succession of projections, nor is it an animated photograph. I saw (for I am now old) the first animated pictures — a train arriving at a station, a man driving a waggon, another watering flowers in a garden and at the same time sprinkling the other people there, causing them to run and to protest. But those films were interesting only as a curiosity; they showed photographs of men and machines, or just hands and arms, in movement. This aroused an interest of mere curiosity which was soon satisfied and speedily produced satiety; so there was no real interest.

A cinematographic projection is quite another thing, because it stimulates various sense organs, as *Ponzo* justly observed at the Congress of Filmology at Venice in the autumn of 1949; and that is not to say that what is presented to us must be perfectly synchronised. Whilst the

character acts in one direction, the sound may act in another. There may be an unrhythmic between one sequence and another, between a visual sequence and a sound sequence, or between the various sound sequences; this diversity of balance in a film results in the spectator having to find for himself the meaning of an action, to seek a way out of the uncertainty occasioned by the unequal rhythm, to "grasp" (putting the thing in one word, though not very precisely) the film. It is just this activity of the spectator which keeps alive his interest. He says to himself at the end of a film that everything has happened just as he foresaw or as he feared.

The characters play their parts but do not know what awaits them; they do not foresee the consequences of what they are doing. That is what happens in real life; but the spectator, himself involved in the action (he is thus involved only to the point where he can follow the action but not so far that he does not remain outside it) foresees the end, enjoys in advance the success of the action or is saddened by its consequences.

Thus for the duration of the film the spectator continues to be involved in the action, to take part in the life of the characters concerned, and at the same time to be above and outside them.

Naturally it falls to the director to create by his skill situations and an inter-play of situations to quicken the spectator's interest without letting him be aware of the fact.

Many films which make too elaborate an inter-play of situations and characters end by tiring the spectator instead of interesting him, because these cross currents and super-impositions continually demand of him a fresh interpretation of the action. Moreover in such cases the devices of the director become evident and then all interest goes. A trifle, some contradiction, a device which does not come off, some small background detail which betrays the director's artifice, any of these is sufficient to ruin a film produced in every other way with great ability and care. This is the reason why it is often said that the art of a director consists not so much in unfolding a tale as in knowing how to "cut" the sequences. This is a difficult art because it becomes all too easy to present actions or characters in a mutilated fashion. In a word, anything that draws attention to special touch or a piece of montage or artifice is sufficient to lessen the interest.

The word "end" must appear on the screen at an opportune moment, neither too soon nor too late. It should come at the point when the spectator emerges in a natural way from the dream state induced by the film, that is when he himself feels that the dénouement of the film has been reached.

The whole psychological art of a director lies in those points which I have illustrated above; it consists in hiding enough from the spectator for him to live and share in the whole action and to pursue it to the finish, finding, according to his own interpretation, a logical sequence of events. This explains why if the interest of a film lies in its power to make us act and to project our own sentiments and our most intimate *ego*, nevertheless no film can interest all men equally. That would be tantamount to saying that all men are alike, think in the same manner, love the same things, practise the same virtues and appreciate the same action. We find that the variety of human actions is qualified by habits, by the influence of environment, by the effects of education and instruction, so that men of the same social status, from the same neighbourhood, or of the same way of life, judge things by the same standards; yet so great is the variety of human kind that at the end of a film the latter may be judged very differently by the various spectators. Everyone, in fact, sees himself in the film, his own world, his own life, above all his sub-conscious self, and is interested or bored according as the film lends itself or not to his manner of life.

In conclusion it can be said, I feel, that the film renews today what the novel did at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This is not to say that the film takes the place of, or is a substitute for, the novel; but certainly it has been able, by its special characteristics, to make real the subjective states of the spectator far better than a novel can for its reader.

All this goes to show us the psychology of the cinema; from this point it is easy to make the necessary applications and formulate practical rules, whether with regard to the construction of the film or to the judgment we shall form on any particular film, or again, especially, to the steps we Catholics must take to ensure that films may be means of entertainment, but above all a means of education.

SACRED ART

ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW LIFE

The day Luciano Emmer and Enrico Gras realised the possibilities of film in its application to paintings must be remembered as a capital event in the history of cinema and in the history of art. It may even be that their discovery will be recognised as that inherent identity between two forms of artistic expression hitherto confined within the limits of tiresome analogies.

The discovery made by these two Italian "documentarists" opens up a new field for the cinema. Thanks to their work, we are no longer to see those hideous and pedantic documentaries which had the audacity to inform us that Michael Angelo was a genius or which complacently claimed to discover that Leonardo da Vinci was a man who possessed every talent. This is the first time as far as we know that the camera has penetrated the spirit of painting, animating the pictorial object with a new life.

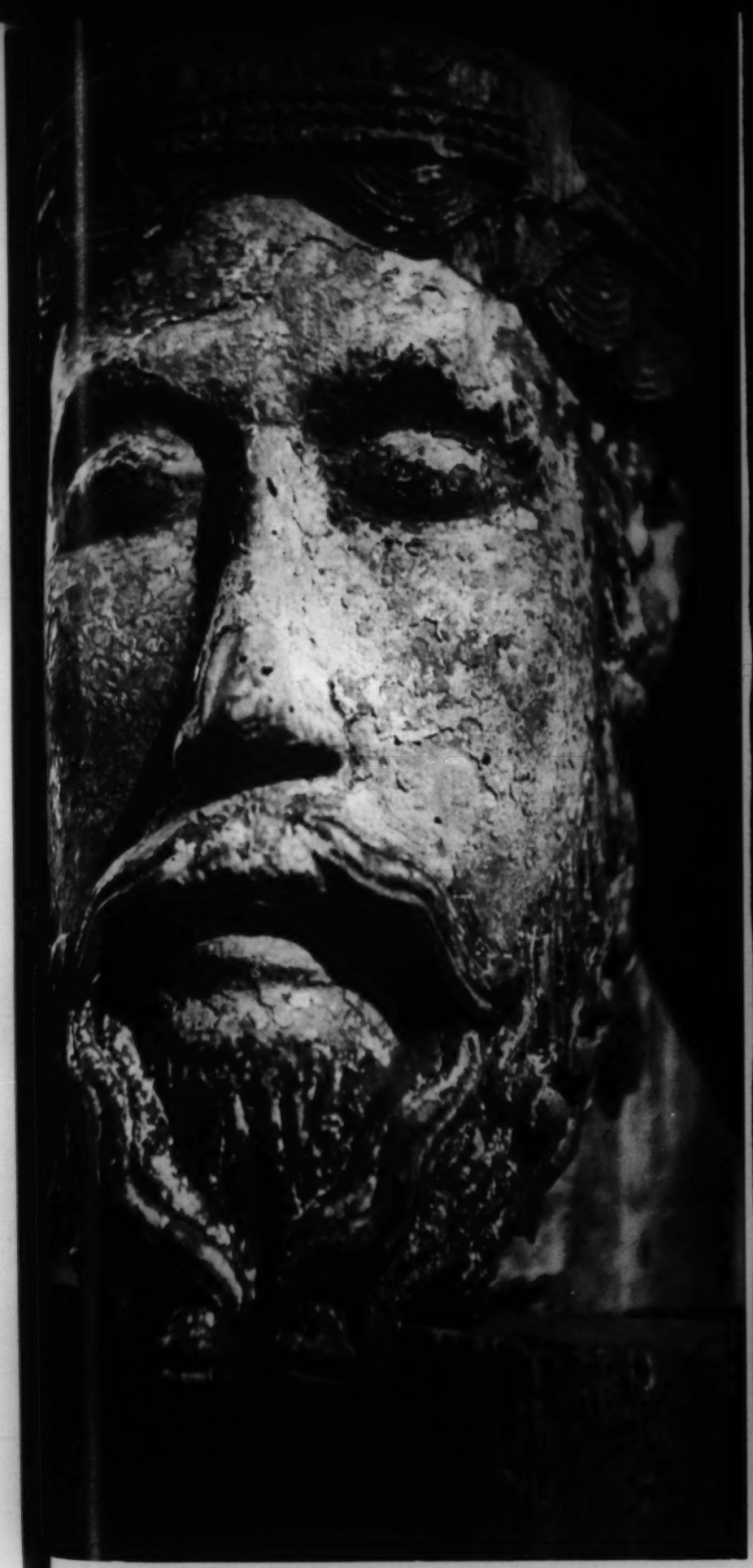
The drama of the Son of Man, *better known by the title of* Giotto, *a veritable vivification of the Padua frescoes, brings that horizon into sight. Three hundred metres of film had sufficed to arouse spectators grown apathetic to the wearying hum of so much useless film.*

Before the production of Giotto, *the traditional documentaries were in a rut. On the pretext of winning popular support these short films were abandoning their educational field and had become vulgar in their anxiety to reach the general public. Witticisms accompanied comments on the châteaux of the Loire and puns attempted without rhyme or reason.*

The Emmer school subjects the documentary film to the rules demanded by the public itself. Ten years after Giotto, *certain popular picture-houses are applauding* Van Gogh *by Alain Resnais. The advance made in this direction will be appreciated when we remember that the previous generation had regarded Vincent van Gogh as the height of artistic folly.*

Between Giotto *and* Van Gogh *there appeared various works which were perhaps less successful but no less animated by the new impulse towards interior significance. The movement of the camera belongs to the most widely-spoken language and Emmer's secret, which made it possible for Giotto's warlike archangels to bear down upon the spectator, also applies perfectly to Watteau's "Escarpolette" which advances and recedes in Francisci's* Risveglio di Primavera *(Lux.).*

Painting and sculpture furnish the cinema with a wonderful and practically inexhaustible wealth of opportunities: whole centuries are at our disposal. The "Holy Lamb" of the brothers Van Eyck becomes The Holy Lamb *by André Cauvin, and may be compared with his* Memling. Rubens and His Times, *by René Huyghe (1938) and* Rubens *by Paul Haesaerts and Henri Storck come very close to the* Monde de Paul Delvaux *or* The Apocalypse *by H. G. Casparius, and Guiliano Betti's* Botticelli.



A ray of light was all that Maurice Cloche needed . . .

. . . to give life to this Auvergne figure of Christ (XIIth century)

SACRED ART SHOWS NEW LIFE ON THE SCREEN

PAINTING . . .

(The Passion according to Saint Matthew, Italian film)

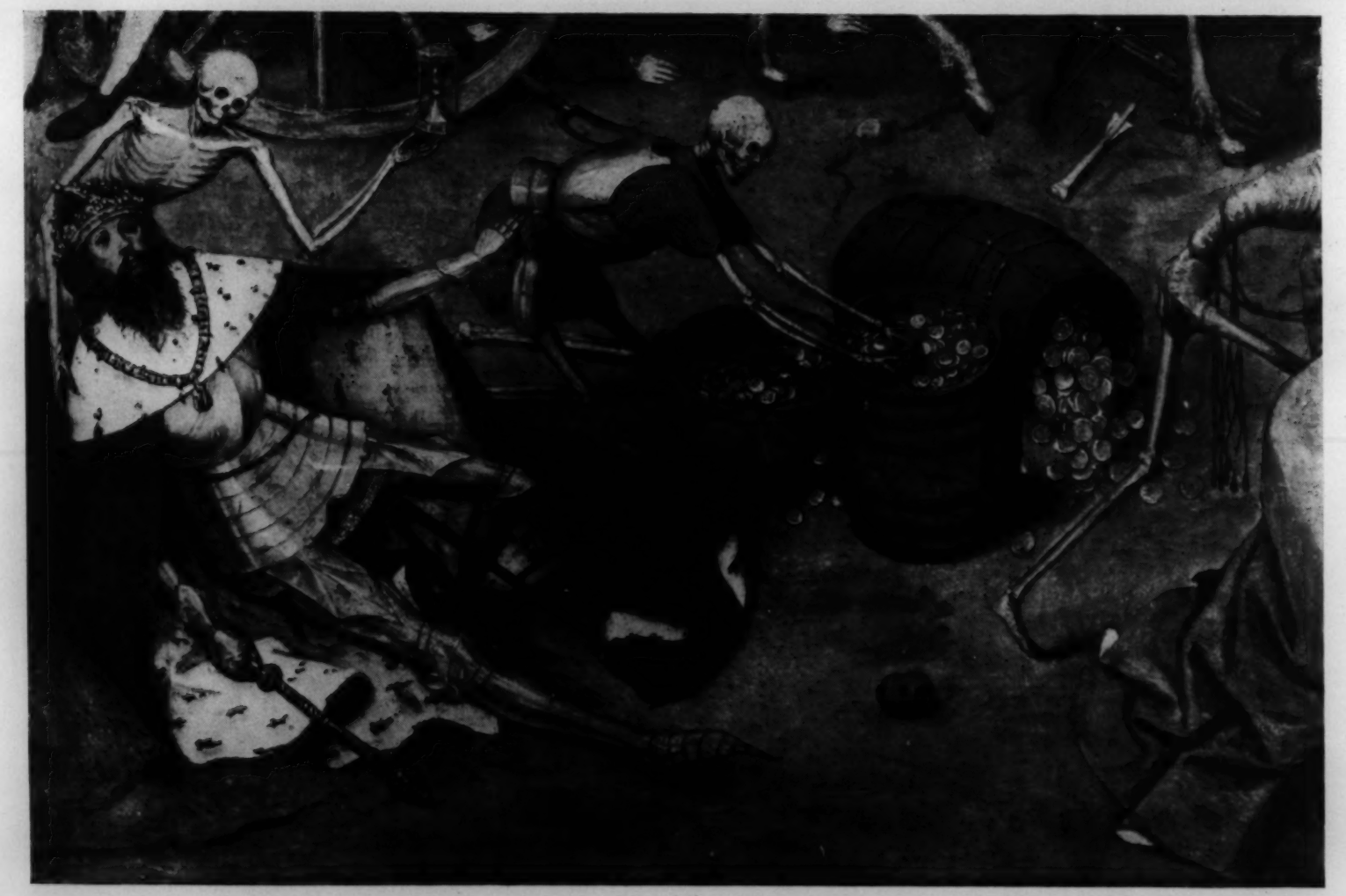
SCULPTURE . . .

(The Gospel of Stone, French film)

SACRED DANCE . . .

(KALPANA, Hindoo film)

"The Kiss of Judas" in *Giotto*, by Luciano Emmer and Enrico Gras.



Detail of "The Triumph of Death", by Brueghel, in Castelli Gattinara's *Il Demoniaco nell' arte*.

«Each of us sees the man who was called Jesus and who we believe was God, but the vision we have of Him is so personal that it cannot be communicated.»

«We imagine Jesus as our nature would wish Him to be, as our love demands. We recreate Him, certainly not to our own image and likeness but to satisfy the need that urges us not to lose heart in His presence.»

«Like all God's creatures, Jesus transformed Himself to concord with the heart that reflected Him.»

FRANÇOIS MAURIAC.

Above: A Crucifix of the Auvergne School (Louvre).

Right: Detail of the Royal Portal, Chartres Cathedral. From the short by Maurice Cloche, *Gothic Images;* filmed by Claude Renoir. (Roger Poutrel).

The Italians are today in a privileged position. They can display all Emmer's works. Cantico della Creatura *(on the frescoes of Assisi), Guerrieri (Piero della Francesca, Simone Martini Uccello),* Histoire du Paradis Terrestre *(Bosch),* The Legend of St. Ursula *(according to Capaccio),* Sulla via di Damasco *(The Road to Damascus),* Goya *(1949) and* The Legend of Cosmos and Damien *(Angelico).* Carpaccio *was given another interpreter after Emmer: Umberto Barbaro. Painting has served to illustrate the life of Jean Sebastien Bach in* The Passion According to Saint Matthew, *by Ernst Marischka.*

Raphael's Descent from the Cross *found an effective commentator in Betti.* The Life of the Virgin *is presented throughout an immense iconographical work in* Eterna Inspiratrice *by Giampiero Pucci, while the impressionist school finds expression in* I Pittori Impressionisti *by Francesco Pasinetti.*1)

Enrico and Carlo Castelli Gattinara are at present approaching the peak of this kind of film in a tentative production that is both cinematographic and theological: Il Demoniaco Nell'Arte *(400 metres, scenario by Enrico Fulchignoni, music by Roman Vlad). A keenly intelligent text comments upon the great masters who sought the message of the Church in the painter's art: Bosch, Brueghel, Van Leyden, Grünewald, Martin Schongauer, etc.*

Sculpture lends itself less than paintings to the deft play of the photographic lens, especially since for a simple photograph two dimensions are sufficient to render a picture. Curt Œrtel's Michael Angelo *(1940), however, likewise led the way to* The Gospel of Saint Peter, *by André Bureau, and more particularly to Jean-François Noel's stupendous production* Les Gisants, *in which were seen all the funeral monuments of France. The road is nonetheless strewn with difficulties and at every turn literature lies watching.*

Among recent films in this category, we would mention Il Cubismo *(Glauco Pellegrini — 1949), which attacks the same problems as those dealt with in* Guernica *(Resnais and Robert Henssens — 1950) but less rigorously and idealistically;* Images Gothiques *(Maurice Cloche) which gives sculpture a mystic life of shadow and light;* Images Médiévales *(a colour film by William Novik — 1949) which recalls the Italian* Botticelli, *by Luigi Cristiani, in which the colour seems to detract from the effect of the editing.*

To sum up, Emmer's Giotto, *Œrtel's* Michael Angelo, *Resnais'* Van Gogh, *Jean-François Noel's* Les Gisants, *and Castelli Gattinara's* Il Demoniaco Nell'Arte, *are the milestones along this new road of filming works of art. It is one in which sacred art can find a lesson and a hope.*

---

1) Belgium takes a deep interest in these questions and has devoted a valuable album to the subject ("Les Arts Plastiques"). 1—2; 1949. She also organised the International Congress of Art Films (1950) in Brussels, at the Séminaire des Arts (see the special number of the review "Les Beaux Arts", Feb. 1950).

Michel de SAINT-PIERRE
Film critic of "Etudes" and "Témoignage Chrétien", Paris.

RULES FOR THE FILM CRITIC

The pronouncement of judgments for the benefit of others must always be a serious matter.

Without any dramatisation, the film critic must be alive to his responsibilities, which are rendered the heavier by the fact that his pronouncements reach a wide audience, the immense cinema-going public.

I do not propose to linger over this point, but shall limit myself to the remark that there is a certain type of critic who exercises his function in an extraordinarily light-hearted manner....

*

This said, it behoves us to analyse the qualifications which a film critic must have.

First and foremost, the critic must love this new art form, so justly called the Seventh Art, so often the subject of affectionate discussion. That this should be so is right; you should love the cinema or keep silent about it.

Knowledge, too, is essential, and I apologise for the formulation of the following truisms.... The critic should see films often. It is impossible to keep abreast the evolution of this extremely complex art form without studying the developments of the various schools, the French, Italian, American, English, Mexican, Scandinavian, etc.... In addition, an intimate knowledge of the old "classics" is essential: in this respect the Film Societies offer a repertoire full of interest. Acquaintance with the major books on the Seventh Art is important; amongst them the following must be singled out: the remarkable works of Georges Charensol, whose latest book is "Panorama du Cinéma" (1); and of Sadoul, author of "Le Cinéma" (2); "L'Histoire du Cinéma" by Bardèche and Brasillach (3); Marcel L'Herbier's "Intelligence du Cinématographe" (4); André Ruszkowski's interesting pamphlet "Cinéma Art Nouveau" (5); and two recent publications, "Le Cinéma par Ceux Qui Le Font" (anthology collected by Denis Marion) (6), and Marcel Lapierre's "Les Cent Visages du Cinéma" (7), which provides a magnificently illustrated and very full documentation.

Lastly and most important, the critic should not shun "spade work"; in other words, he should never miss any opportunity of seeing films. For how can a writer present the integral cinema, artistic and technical, to his readers if he does not take the trouble to "be in at the birth" of films? This is a question of common sense, and a primary truth. But primary truths are often the first to be forgotten....

which brings us to the substance of film criticism.

I shall not dwell on such obvious points as the necessity of choice of films for review, of singling out the best and most significant amongst them for praise, of adapting form and content of the review to suit various classes of reader, and so on.

Let us assume that such questions have been settled. We have our critic face to face with an important film, let us say, for example, Le Silence est d'Or. *The critic must first consider the film in its context as part of the whole work of its director, (in this case René Clair): then he must consider it as part of French production as a whole: then, if possible, consider it in the immense framework of world production.*

To illustrate my point, I shall quote from a review of Le Silence est d'Or *which seems to me to comply with all the rules. My author places the film in its context as follows:*

"Anxiety as to the future of French production is justifiable. But 1947, already the year of Farrebique *and now the year of* Le Silence est d'Or *deserves to be called a great year."*

"The finished perfection and new depth of emotion of Le Silence est d'Or *mark a turning point in the career of René Clair."*

"One can say with confidence that this film is a masterpiece. Perhaps not René Clair's greatest masterpiece. We lack the perspective to judge whether posterity will prefer Entr'Acte *or* The Italian Straw Hat. *But the film is the best thing Clair has done since his 15 years' absence from France. Not that any of his foreign films has been negligible (from* Break the News *to* Six Little Indians), *but they have all lacked that something that only Paris can give. For full realisation of his power our Anteus had to return to his native soil."*

The next step is the telling of the story of the film; many critics are guilty of negligence in this respect, but we must insist.

In the "Livre d'Or du Cinema" that expert scenario writer, Simon Gantillon, emphasises the vital importance of the scenario. It would, unfortunately, be only too easy to cry shame upon the banality of the general run of themes offered to the Seventh Art. A critic cannot, therefore, neglect so important a part of his task as the analysis of a film's subject. We have all seen second rate productions which have contained fine photography and rhythm; for example, the great director, René Clement's Les Maudits. *This film was a near failure on the artistic plane, thanks to the extravagant scenario of Jacques Campanez, a gentleman who, — let me hasten to say that I have never met him, have never set eyes on him —*

---

(1) Ed. Melot.

(2) Ed. Bibliothèque Française.

(3) Ed. Martel.

(4) Ed. Corrêa.

(5) Collection O. F. D. A., Ed. "Penser Vrai", 4, rue Sainte-Catherine, Lyons.

(6) Arthème Fayard Library.

(7) Ed. Grasset. Marcel Lapierre had already published a collection of important essays under the title "Anthologie du Cinéma" (La Nouvelle Edition, Paris).

is to the French cinema what phylloxera is to the vine. It was his poor scenario that caused Les Maudits *to rank lower than René Clément's* La Bataille du Rail *and* Le Père Tranquille.

Importance of subject. And primary necessity for stern criticism of weaknesses in scenario. There is, alas, much to be done in this sphere, but that is another question.

I have said that the reviewer must tell the story of the film. There is a second reason, not purely within the domain of criticism, for this; the reader's wish to know what a film is about. He has a right to be informed. He wants the reviewer to tell him whether a film is a romance, a thriller, a psychological study, etc., or a mixture of these elements, and in what proportions. We have already remarked that too many critics are averse to giving a synopsis of the film under discussion. Believe me, this is one of the critic's most difficult, not to say thankless, tasks. In some 15 or 20 lines we have to summarise a mystery, a complicated adventure story or a comedy full of subtlety and endless twists. But let us repeat for our own benefit the banal and often disregarded truth that we are writing for the benefit of our readers.

Some magnanimity is necessary, and the critic should be allowed to resort to certain expedients in telling his story. See the method employed by Georges Sadoul for elucidating the theme of Le Silence est d'Or.

"René Clair has said that his scenario is a new version for "L'Ecole des Femmes." To a lesser degree, certainly, than The Italian Straw Hat *was a new version of Labiche. Arnolphe is Maurice Chevalier; Agnès, Marcelle Derrien; Horace, François Périer. Here the part of Horace is in higher relief than that of Agnès. Rather might it be said that "L'Ecole des Amants" is the model. But Arnolphe remains the most important character. M. Emile, the ageing Casanova, is forced for the first time to yield the palm to youth, whose unwilling confidant and counsellor he is."*

✱

André Berthomieu, who remains, with all his skill, a most indifferent director, but is a sound grammarian of the cinema, has never ceased to reiterate, with Malraux, Marcel L'Herbier and many others, that a film is really a piece of architecture, and that many different artists have a share in the completed whole. Camera artist, painter, musician, sometimes the dancer and exponent of mime, and, as we have said, the writer.

This very diversity implies further obligations for the critic..

In this regard we should all, or nearly all, cry mea culpa. *Sadoul, for instance, in the article on* Le Silence est d'Or *to which I have already referred, dismissed in three lines the share of the different artists who have contributed to the finished article: "Equal praise is due to the rest of the cast and to the technicians. A masterpiece can only be the result of team-work." That is all.... it must be admitted that the bouquet is a small one. Considerations of pace, and the critic's desire to please his readers often result in the omission of all reference to technicians, musicians and even script-writer. This is wrong.*

It should not be necessary to insist further. Suffice it to recall that the famous camera-man Matras and Henri Dutilleux (who designed the sets for La Fille du Diable *and* Café du Cadran) *have more than once complained in the press of the injustice they have suffered from critical silence. To quote Christian Matras:*

"In the making of a film the camera-man is the visual specialist.... The actor's "Interpretation" of a role is spoken of, but there is no equivalent term for the camera-man, who is, after all, the "interpreter" of the visuals, under the controlling hand of the director. The decors and the characters are presented to him for visual interpretation...."

It would be difficult to improve upon this summing up of the situation.

The question of the script-writer is very similar. Dialogue is of great importance and can alter the whole rhythm and even the originality of a film.

We critics are not solely responsible for the fact that the dialogue-writer's role is so often treated as of secondary importance. I cannot, in this connection, draw further upon my original example, for René Clair wrote the dialogue for Le Silence est d'Or *himself, but shall turn to the remarks of the script-writer Marc Gilbert Sauvageon — who knows what he is talking about. "Nothing appears easier than to define the role and the rights of the script-writer, and yet nothing gives rise to more repercussions and difficulties. He has, in fact, suddenly arisen from nowhere to play an increasingly important part, just as the ivy ends by overwhelming the wall at whose foot it has been planted. Brought into being by the mechanics of film development, he finds himself to-day in opposition to the purely technical side, which is unwilling either to share or to abdicate in his favour. This silent struggle between director and writer is all pervasive, beginning at the construction of the scenario, continuing through the editing of the completed script, to develop on the floor and reach its culmination when the results of the combination of those warring yet eternally wedded enemies, the visual and the aural, are presented to the general public.*

I am not implying that directors and film writers live in a permanent state of armed hostility. The battle may be fierce, but it is kept beneath the surface, and everyone is very polite.

Having said this, we must not concede every point to the writer. It sometimes happens that, far from being oppressed by the director, a writer may be aggressive, wooden-headed, shallow; as, to my mind, are Prévert in Les Portes de la Nuit *and Jean Paul Sartre in* Les Jeux sont Faits. *They show all the symptoms of verbal diarrhoea.*

I have thought fit to dwell on this quarrel because it seems to me that the film critic may very well play the arbiter between director and writer in this battle of the visuals and the aurals.

To sum up: the critic must love the cinema and have an intimate understanding of all its intricacies.

Having carefully chosen his film, he must be able to
place it in its true context —
give a summary of its theme, with due attention to the script —
see it as a piece of architecture — and examine the component parts —
judge the literary and cinematic qualities of the script.

(I have not stressed the necessity of seeing a film in a perspective entirely free from political bias, for this seems to me to be an elementary rule of all art criticism.)

And now, you will say, let's talk of the stars.

So be it: but with discretion, for the star, the famous actor or actress, is in no way indispensable to the artistic or even the commercial success of a film.

La Bataille du Rail *(actors: railwaymen);* Farrebique *(actors: peasant farmers) and* La Bataille de l'Eau Lourde *are striking illustrations of a thesis which is shared by most real lovers of the cinema.*

On this point, it is satisfactory to note a growing tendency on the part of directors to give opportunities to little-known actors and actresses: for instance, Laurence Olivier's discovery of Jean Simmons and Leenhardt's choice of the remarkable little Odile Versois for Les Dernières Vacances: *whilst Clouzot staked his latest film,* Manon, *on the talent of Cécile Aubry. And to mention* Le Silence est d'Or *for a last time, the unknown Marcelle Derrien shared the honours with Maurice Chevalier.*

Our screens have plenty of established stars. Why, therefore, should our foremost film makers choose unknown actresses discovered by chance in our studios? Because the age of the unchallenged and unchallengeable star has passed....

On this point the reviewer must show no weakness. He must do violence to his public. He must attack the tendency to treat actors and actresses as though they were show cattle bedecked by the producer and paraded before millions of potential buyers. By all means let us give credit to the screen's great comedians, whom I shall not trouble to name now. But the critic must not fail to do so.

And what, may I ask, of these faces suddenly thrust at us in long held close-up, in the style known in the jargon of art as expressionism?

What of the passionate kiss of beautiful lips enlarged to abysmal proportions, whilst lashes flutter on enormous eyes like great wings over a lake?

This is no longer photographic art, but photographic exploration of the human countenance.

We should describe it as a waste of film and a pandering to the public's taste for rubbish.

Let us, then, give the actors the place that is theirs, a place by no means negligible but nevertheless of secondary importance.

*

Finally we come to the most important and obscure aspect of the whole question: the critic must not forget that every film of any value has some human significance.

The evidence is inescapable, even in the case of films which aim at a documentary objectivity. Consider Nicole Vedrès' Paris 1900, *a film which can teach a bitter lesson on the social plane: or Georges Rouquier's* Farrebique, *simply a series of camera studies of peasant life, but which nevertheless exudes an atmosphere of religious faith.*

It is perhaps here in this new and living art form that there is the greatest difficulty in distinguishing between art and real life, between ethics and the aesthetic.

I am not saying that the critic should be a moraliser, even when writing for confessional publications, for I am keeping strictly within the domain of art criticism as such.

To me it seems impossible to ignore the critic's obligation to bring to the notice of his readers both the artistic value and the human significance of a film.

The two can, of course, be self-opposed, but often such opposition is, I think, more apparent than real. Doubtless the excellence of Le Diable au Corps *is marred by the fact that the film is a betrayal of true adolescence. In the same way, Clouzot's* Manon *may seem to lack something because a human love, magnificently purified, does not find the complete fulfilment of a movement towards God. Whereas the Abbé Prévost's book....*

But it will not do to go too far in this direction. Until the end of time the argument on the dependence or independence of aesthetic and ethic will rage. The whole subject is a mystery which we make no claim to elucidate. But we do say that to understand the real significance of a film remains part of the critic's duty.

*

André Malraux loves the cinema; he has worked for it and he speaks of it marvellously well. This is how he concludes an article, with that touch of rather haughty bitterness which is his hall-mark: "The cinema is, moreover, an industry."

That we lack good film critics is a fact that needs emphasising. I have said so before, and I say it again.

We have, it is true, some very good critics: Georges Charensol, Louis Chauvet, Georges Sadoul, Roger Lannes, Roger Régent, Denis Marion, and many others....

But a crop of new vocations to this fascinating and thankless work is an urgent need. Taste, the ability to write and professional integrity are qualities still too rarely combined in the film critic, and the press is too ready to open its columns to amateur, slipshod ignoramuses.

Those others who appreciate their responsibilities have much work to do: let them tackle it resolutely.

Film production : The essential preliminaries

by LO DUCA

An art-form like the cinema, which is developed within time, has its own characteristic features. Custom (and habitude) give the cinema only the illusion of simultaneousness. We can speed up the rhythm and reduce the montage to a "sarabande" of pictures, but we shall not be able to alter the fundamental fact of its co-ordination.

At this point, scholastics would recall a dictum of St. Thomas :

> "It is impossible for one man's will to be directed at the same time to divers things, as last ends."
>
> Summa theologica I, 85. 4.

In the research stage of the intellectual construction of a film it is, therefore, necessary to avoid the *l*iterary pitfall of the dynamic appearance of some subjects; they appear to be essentially cinematic only because one has in mind a rapid, unambitious montage and a dizzy succession of shots. Faulkner is not more filmic than Shakespeare; at the most, he can engender the *equivalent* of film tempo.

The cinema provides empirical proof of the impossibility of such simultaneity; we can never surmount the process of sequence and see *two* pictures at the same time.

(Napoleon's feat, when he dictated three letters at the "same" time — a legend piously garnered by Abel Gance — obviously involves *three* different times: it confirms our point.)

Ignoring as ingenuous the temptation (one of the most alluring in the filmic medium) to entrust to the camera everything which moves, gallops, runs, glides, flows or leaps, under the pretext that it reproduces movement, we are faced with innumerable literary temptations. The detailed descriptions of Balzac or Poe appear to some directors to be ideal pasture for their cameras. Ready made situations, comic or tragic, might well have been scenarios before they became literature. Of course, this is false.

To judge by their works, it would appear that these misguided and shortsighted directors are satisfied as long as a literary passage can easily be visualised in terms of the screen. I would add that it is incredible that two such widely differing languages, one where words evoke pictures, the other where pictures evoke words, can still be confused.

More serious temptations follow: the desire to "cash in" on a best selling title, the laziness which urges the use of someone else's efforts, even the theft of subjects in their entirety, not forgetting the murder of various famous and innocent works at the hands of unscrupulous men seeking personal gain from past renown.

Although the dismissal of this type of temptation leaves us still in a negative phase, it is none the less useful. At one stroke the possibility of a pseudo cinema and the dubious profits of sharp practices are eliminated.

But in practice ninety-nine directors out of a hundred will succumb to the lure of whatever appears likely to lessen their risks. But we shall not discuss the commercial aspect here. It is example alone which in the long run will bear fruit and will facilitate the birth of a language of the cinema which will be both filmic and honest. That will be the cinema's "word of honour"....

Meanwhile there exist subjects which — whether we like it or not — merit more than others the universality opened to them by the screen. The cinema appeals to the emotions of the masses.

The common language of these masses is necessarily basic — which need not mean base — yet the *subject* can be raised to any level. It is here that the scenario writer and director can use their skill, calling upon all the resources of intuitive psychology.

But the *subject*, which is one particular interpretation, must not be confused with the *theme* which it is used to illustrate. Pudovkin has wisely warned us against the dangers of the pre-selected theme, which is completely "foreign to the conception of art."

The rational sequence of

a) *Theme*

b) *Subject*

c) *Filmic presentation*

can be obtained only when the work is complete. The part played by the artist, therefore, always remains indefinable and, what is more, intangible. It is *after the work* is done that theorists will discover the "golden key" whose very existence has until then been concealed.

In any case, there is no known formula for attaining the ideal, but one can expect indications.

At Harvard University some time ago Cecil B. de Mille made the following discovery, of great consequence in America: "A film writer", he said, "must first find his idea. What idea does he wish to convey, and what subject will he use ?"

Obviously he will have all too wide a choice. The whole of the visible world is in his hands — or rather his eyes — and we include in the visible world all that is made visible by the instruments man has discovered and that has made us revise our ideas of matter; that is, all the applications of microscopy and magnification, electronic physics, to say nothing of the infinite possibilities of the compression or extension of time.

This visible world may be multiplied by the infinite number of angles from which it can be recorded, and the no smaller host of combinations which comparison and contrast of those angles produce. Add to the visible the audible world, the vast kingdom of sounds, either as they are produced by nature in the raw and refined by art or those unknown in either nature or art, like those amazing "*sons dessinés*" which have been studied for twenty years.

It is on this world perceptible to the eyes, the ears and the mind that we train our camera. There are four roads open to us :

a) *Invention*, the exclusive realm of the imagination;

b) *Adaptation*, the advantages and risks of which have already been indicated ;

c) *Documentary presentation*, a slice of real life ;

d) *Transposition*, a reasoned mixture of invention with the documentary, many examples of which will be found in the "Italian School."

(We refrain from enlarging on a fifth road, *abstraction*, which is rather the product of a distillation of thought, of a "*manufacture*", as Paul Valéry used the word.)

Rules would be out of place for the first category (a). At the most we can indicate certain exciting examples, from Feyder and Spaak's map of France to the impressions drawn from the casual life of the streets, in the manner of Prévert and Carné.

Use has been made of a Californian "gadget", a "subject detector", much simpler than a radiation detector, to provoke associations of ideas. Three dials of coloured cardboard are marked with numbered divisions; they merely have to be turned to produce an almost unlimited number of situations. Two dials correspond to different *characters*, whilst the third is devoted to *places*. A key explains the suggestions corresponding to the numbers on the dials, which have then to be completed by the addition of verbs. On one occasion I came across the following situations:

— *a bus-driver* (saves, kills or falls in love with)
— *a duchess* (whom he meets in)
— *a suburban cemetery*

and

— *an orphan girl* (meets)
— *a mother*
— in the *Lost Property Office*.

This is pure Raymond Roussel — in a completely automatic "composition" — and the procedure is doubtless in use to-day, judging by most of the films coming from Hollywood studios.

But invention — which is essential — is at this stage only the bare bones.

Adaptation (b) is not to be despised, even though the easy methods we spoke of must be discarded. Sidney Howard, an American specialist in this field, says that "novels make better films than plays do. The screening of a play demands development, which is bad for a work of art. On the other hand, one must condense a novel to get it on the screen, and that can be all to the good!" We must agree. In this matter, the part played by intelligence is almost that demanded by invention. Had the novel *Fabiola* been translated to the screen in its literary form, even closely condensed, it would have been fatal. Worthy feelings by no means ensure worthy films. It needed Blasetti's great ambition for his theme, his consciousness of a message that must be transmitted, turned into visuals, to make a living film from a pious novel. In Blasetti's view-finder, Cardinal Wiseman's *Fabiola* is only the excuse for a film; there is still a story, but its background has become the transition from one civilisation to another, the victory of human brotherhood over paganism.

In this film, one sentence gives a *beautiful* example of elliptic transposition. To typify the corrupt, intelligent society, decadent but interested in every theory, which Wiseman describes (badly) in several pages, Blasetti makes Fabius — played by Michel Simon — say these telling words: "All right; let them become Christians. They will still remain *poor;* that is what matters, that they should still be slaves."

This is a précis which I find admirable and typical, and its effects will last longer than either the film or the novel.

Adaptations of subjects inspired by religious themes are the most difficult. The faith must be portrayed by a technique which is expressive without being slavish. One must have the courage to avoid films which may be theologically sound but whose poverty of spectacle and lack of form have an adverse effect on the subject.

Obviously it is easier to detail the pitfalls and state principles than to outline their field of application. But we must first educate our film makers; the films will follow.

In the scale of examples which runs from Epinal's pictures and *The Sign of the Cross* to an actor's "reincarnation" in *Monsieur Vincent*, we should remember one of the finest psychological and perhaps aesthetic discoveries in religious films, a discovery of far-reaching effect: it was that American film on the life of Jesus, in which Our Lord's Face was never seen; instead, an *aura* illuminated the screen, so that each spectator could retain his own imagined picture of Christ.

Monsieur Vincent is sometimes blamed for its filmic weakness, which is certainly not worthy of the art of Pierre Fresnay. Perhaps we should regard the film as a romantically treated documentary, which for chronological reasons could only be made in the twentieth century — a documentary relying so heavily on Pierre Fresnay as almost to become the documentary of his art. But considering that his aim is the "reincarnation" of the Saint, that his presence saves the film and gives it qualities which it would not otherwise have attained, that his acting in itself conveys a beautiful message, we can allow the film its place in the cinema world.

(*Mutatis mutandis*, the extent to which literature influenced the art of Leonardo da Vinci, but no one would on that account deny him his place in the history of painting.)

The documentary (c) does not really concern this enquiry, but it does contain the fundamental principles of the cinema. It is, so to speak, the grammar which can lead to such transpositions as *Farrebique* or even *Terre Tremble*. Think for a moment of the extraordinary films — of a documentary nature — that could be made about *one day* in the life of a man, a family, a child, a priest, or one day's work in any calling in any setting. There would be no more talk of uninteresting jobs or of uninteresting films.

But this would require even more inspired and carefully planned scenarios than entertainment films do. Amateurs, be warned !

These transpositions lead on to the most exciting type, in which the reality of documentary is interwoven with the synthesis of invention. This is the meeting place between the first and fourth methods, which we called (d).

A typical example is *Bicycle Thieves*, the painstaking research for which — the scenario took six months to correct — made it possible for a patchwork of scenes from everyday life to be turned into a work of art, with a message far higher than its visual content.

The field for the transpositions is vast. We can find in real life, better than from dials or existing sources, or both together, subjects which will fit in with our experience of the world, or our inner and almost secret vision of man and things.

From the subject we pass at once to the phase of ornamentation, assimilation and elaboration that constitutes the scenario, the backbone of the film. Its material description is naturally one of the things to be learnt. The scenario is, as we know, a thick notebook of 150 to 500 pages, in which are written 50 or 60 scenes or sequences. By custom, the scenario is drawn up in two columns, the right-hand one being kept for the description of scene, movement and action, while the left-hand contains everything to do with *sound*, dialogue, music, noise, etc.

Nothing prevents us from changing this custom completely, from putting what is normally on the left on the right, from adding sketches as in Cocteau's scenarios, or musical scores, as in Carné's. That is not the problem of the scenario at all. The cineast will not learn from such details to distinguish the essential from the superfluous, the central design of his subject from vague background, or to separate dramatic interest and force of argument from a fragmentation of the subject or a confusion of aims.

The scenario is to a thought or a doctrine a sort of apologue or parable; whence, of course, its importance as a means of communication and diffusion of ideas.

To these problems then, the film technician brings his technique, his needs, his capabilities and limitations.

And so we come to the last stage of the film, which may still be called a "literary" stage; the shooting script. This means the addition, to the notes on set, dialogue and action, of camera positions, sequence of pictures, instructions to electricians and sound staff, and, most important of all, the use of shots and their montage. I sometimes dream of the amazing shooting script which it must have taken to produce that extraordinary succession of shots, Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc*.

At this stage, the cineast must be particularly sensitive to the eloquence of the language of film. If he wants to make a real picture, he must think of the means at his personal disposal.

Béla Balàsz, perhaps too well known as a theorist, author of the scenario and shooting script of *Somewhere in Europe*, says that the language of film can be explained as three processes :

montage
camera angle
foreground.

It is to be observed that the camera angle exists only because of the montage and that the foreground is really part of the camera angle. Thus the whole language of film refers back to montage, in all its forms. This does not mean simply sticking bits of film end to end, but foreseeing, well in advance of needing them, the camera movements, the unfolding of the plot, and the use of shots which all have reference to an inner theme of the film.

Montage also includes the rhythm of the plot, the way it is portrayed and its chronology, whether straightforward or in flash-back. The formula of the "reversed" film, like a detective story — written end first, as the classic definition has it — is only one example. It is contained in a piece of advice from Griffith, who used to say that to ensure success the audience must be made to laugh, weep and *be expectant*. There is no better way of maintaining this expectation than by skilfully deferring the end of the story.

It is montage which controls the film's content, and uses every effect with an eye to parallel, preceding or succeeding effects. One is almost tempted to credit the montage with a kind of morality by which the stupid, conventional and anti-Christian "happy ending" can be avoided where it should not appear.

But we are going too far. Let us go back to the annotated scenario, the shooting script, in which every component part has its place.

The dialogue is now seen in terms of its visual action, the make-up assumes a new meaning in conjunction with costume and character. At this stage even the various actors' parts begin to take shape. It is to be regretted that films are generally written round known and typical figures, who are celebrated and therefore expensive. Ideally, the actors should be chosen after the film has been envisaged, except for a few touches which their personal characteristics might suggest later.

Let us give the screen picture of a character the imagined value of 100.

The character's "presence", the fact that he appears in two dimensions on the screen, represents 50% of the picture. His actions — what in the theatre would be called his art — are worth 30%. The cinema audience brings its own experience to the enjoyment of the film in the proportion of 20%. All these combined make up a harmonious and living whole, a true unity of the seventh art.

When that art depends on professional actors, we shall always have the 50% created by actual image, and the 20% which is the audience's part, but we have 40, 50 or 60% to add for the actor's part, according to whether it is more or less intelligently played. Thus we have a total of 110, 120 or 130%, which naturally takes our minds beyond the cinema itself. This is the great lesson to be drawn from contemporary Italian films, a lesson which René Clair tried to point some time ago in *Air Pur*, and Marcel Carné in *La Fleur de l'Age*, both films of great promise which unfortunately was not fulfilled. It is a lesson we should include in the marginal notes on the shooting script, side by side with our preferences about lighting, shots, and montage.

Rehlinger says very rightly that the shooting is like a musical score; both may be said to be the abstract symbols of a concrete manifestation — film or music. But in the case of music the score already contains all the art of the work, whilst the scenario contains none of the art of the future film.

This is not intended to emphasise unduly the vanity of what we have said about the mental processes which must precede the making of a film, but rather to compel us to greater modesty.

For the director, the shooting script is his logbook, his chart, the exact plotting of his route; for us, the scenario, that strange thing which mingles every language — the poet's, the technician's, the photographer's and the "*maître de ballet's*" — must be the point from which we set out to search for the true cinema; by which I mean the new language which demands not only a new grammar but a *thought-pattern* as supple and as controlled as the invention which man has been using for half a century. Sometimes, it is true, I have been hard to the point of injustice towards most of the work turned out by the cinema world, but it seems to me, to paraphrase Flaubert, that we must have the following strict formula writ large :

FACILE FILMS DESTROY THE ART

Georges CHARENSOL
Art critic,
film critic of "Les Nouvelles Littéraires", Paris.

THE CINEMA AND THE PUBLIC

The cinema-going public may be divided into two categories. There are those who find in the film a kind of opium the quality of which matters little to them. They go to the cinema always on the same day, as often as not to the same place regardless of programme. In this first group may be placed those who have only one cinema within easy reach of their homes and, therefore, remain entirely dependent on the ideas of whoever arranges the programmes there.

As cinemas become more numerous, however, and as minds become more critical, audiences are tending to swell the category of those who choose their films. At present this choice is made principally by reference to the title and to the names of the actors. The importance of this part which actors play in the economy of the cinema is so well understood by producers that, on occasion, they do not hesitate to launch a film star as one would a brand of soap or a make of car. Even when they do not go so far as that, it is on the actors' names that they bring their advertising technique to play. For, as yet, certain members of the industry have seen no great difference between a film and any other merchandise and, to ensure its success, they have made use of the traditional methods ready to hand in the poster or the advertisement hoarding.

It has happened, however, during recent years especially, that other factors have come into play and that films which have been launched without flourish of trumpets have been outstandingly successful commercially. I might mention, during the last season in Paris, Jour de Fête, Le Rendez-vous de Juillet, Louisiana Story, Passport to Pimlico *and* Bicycle Thieves. *These films reached a very wide public, whereas, before the war, whether on account of the unusual nature of their plots or their unpretentious execution, their distribution would have been limited to the specialist cinemas, and they might even never have been shown to ordinary audiences. Since the films which I have just named are endowed with neither striking titles nor sensational stars, it follows that today a sizeable public is appreciative of a high standard of script-writing, of beauty in landscape shots and of truthfulness in social settings. This is so true that exhibitors now look out for unusual films. For this reason neo-realist Italian films or Mexican productions have enjoyed a success that, before the war, would have been inexplicable at a time when the only films to reach the public came from Hollywood or Paris.*

Two factors have combined to accelerate this far-reaching development: criticism and the film societies. At one time in France, as in America at the present time, a carefully fostered confusion prevailed between criticism and advertising. It was not as if the Paris press had no independent film critics. However, the enormous advertising incomes made available by the trade to the daily newspapers prompted the latter to nurse their best customers and so audiences no longer gave any credence to articles praising in identical terms the most notable masterpieces and the worst flops.

It is to the credit of the "Association Française de la Critique de Cinéma" that it took advantage of the great confusion existing in the French press at the time of the Liberation to organise all the film critics, enabling them to resist the encroachments of advertising on their domain. Today, it may be said, French criticism is almost everywhere independent. It is free to make mistakes. No longer under orders, it can devote itself to that task of educating the public which is its first duty. We may say that, on the whole, it is not inferior to its task. In the periodicals especially writers have enough space to rise to general ideas. They are none the less capable of this for having, as young people for the most part, a taste for theories and a passion for new ideas. All that goes to create an interchange of ideas, an atmosphere of enthusiasm which holds the public, inspiring it to explore for itself, encouraging it to choose, instead of its weekly Western, the production which, as it will have learned from its regular critic, introduces a "fresh atmosphere".

I had occasion recently to observe an interesting fact. The firm which distributed The Bicycle Thieves *organised a competition, asking the public to give their opinion of this film. It also asked them to state the name of their newspaper as well. Vittorio de Sica's film had been received with enthusiasm by the whole of the Paris press with the exception of one solitary "daily". The opinions expressed by the public were nearly all favourable, the only ones to show themselves hostile being the readers of the newspaper which had violently criticised the film; and, more often than not, the reasons given were identical with those which the readers had found over the signature of their regular critic.*

If the press is teaching the public to take an interest in directors and script writers, to appreciate depth of plot and perfection of technique, how much

more influential in this field is the part played by the film societies. They appeal to a public which, though restricted, has an enthusiasm for new ideas; for whoever joins a film society is an enthusiast whose interest is already aroused. The "Fédération des Ciné-Clubs" has, moreover, so widely extended its influence since the war that there are no longer just a few hundred connoisseurs interested in specialised productions. Nowadays thousands agree to pay a subscription entitling them to see old films — the "screen classics", new productions which are shown to them before they reach the general public or, even, "films maudits", that is to say, productions whose unusual nature has jeopardized their prospects of commercial success.

Above all, moreover, they go to take part in the discussion which follows the show. They give their opinions freely, agreeing or disagreeing with those expressed by the expert leading the discussion. Even if these discussions are sometimes quite futile, they-have the immense advantage of introducing the public to that understructure of the cinema of which it receives the falsest of impressions from the fan magazines which carefully conceal all that is labour without laurels, taking pains to emphasize only the glamorous side of studio work or to show the private lives of film stars in the most attractive light.

Furthermore the influence of these organisations extends far beyond their membership and here we touch upon the important question of the spoken word in publicity. While it is certain that an opinion given by word of mouth by someone of acknowledged taste will be eagerly acted upon, those, however, who lead the way in going of their own accord to see a film, those who set the ball rolling, as it were, are the readers of the best critics, the loyal members of the film societies. It is they who give an outstanding film a good send-off, who sometimes get a disappointing film withdrawn from circulation, for it is as all important to campaign against films of low quality as it is to encourage bolder enterprise.

In spite of their success, the life of the film societies is still difficult, but they have begun to enjoy in France a status which is bound to favour their development. What is especially encouraging is that exhibitors as a rule display no hostility towards these non-commercial organisations. I once even heard the Manageress of a cinema in a small town in the Midi express her satisfaction that her most loyal patrons should all be members of the local film society.

This attitude of mind is becoming so common that the owner of a large cinema in Paris has made it available to the "Association Française de la Critique de Cinéma" for experimental use as a "trial cinema" where, at intervals, one or two reels of specialised films are shown to audiences drawn from a wide public.

It will be necessary for us to persevere with this education of the public if we want the cinema to develop, if we want it to get out the rut. To raise the standard of films without alienating the public; to reconcile the art and the trade; to prove to the producer that he can earn money with a fine production as with a low vaudeville; that is the urgent ask facing us, a task which we have taken in hand and have great hopes of completing.

THE MECHANICS OF A FILM'S SUCCESS

Our colleague, George Charensol, has discussed the ideas expressed recently at the "Institut de l'Opinion Publique" courses. Here we shall give some extracts from a conference on the Mechanics of a Film's Success.

★

The mechanics of success are always extremely complex. In the cinema the complexity is all the greater, for here is no question of special audiences — more or less knowledgeable and arbitrarily selected by the accident of wealth — but of a vast, widespread section of humanity.

A specialist in mass psychology would be better qualified than we are to describe the behaviour of the audiences of the darkened halls and the reflexes which condition the success or failure of a film.

The world has 100,000 cinemas and every year four hundred thousand million francs are spent on ten or twelve thousand million seats.

A more or less consistent reaction from so vast an audience *should* furnish some evidence as to the reasons for the success of a film, but this is not the case.

On the statistical plane, the quality, or lack of it, of the films shown does not stand out in relief, or only accidentally so. The reasons for success are not apparent at first sight and it is not possible to make any scientifically definitive statement as to why the tinted pot-pourri entitled *Forever Amber* should have enjoyed a greater success than *Dies Irae*. Outside the statistical field there remains the microscopic examination of the habits of a town which is greedy for the cinema: Paris.

For twenty years the success or failure of a film has been determined by an audience, always the same, numbering, according to the cinema managers' estimate, between nine and twelve thousand people. Film criticism may influence 25% of this audience — a flattering thought — but it is the tom-tom — the verbal tom-tom of telephone, social gossip, chatter and references — the drum of the nine or twelve thousand people which decrees that *Brief Encounter* is the choicest of the English masterpieces, or that *California* is the most indigestible of American turnips.

With snobbery as their ally, these nine thousand — let us take the lowest estimate — act as a patch of oul on water: by the third day 50,000 people will feel ashamed if they are not able to say :

"I saw Hamlet; the original version, of course. My dear, it's a masterpiece."

"I saw Macbeth. Wells is a prodigy, old man."

"I went to the première of *Bicycle Thieves*." (probably a white lie, but snobbery is rampant). "It is the greatest of all masterpieces."

And so on — in a stream of flattery, echoes, remarks, glitter, vanity, intelligent thought....

The film is launched. With imperious telegrams the provinces rush to book it. If it is French, the foreign distributors wake up. If it is foreign, and shown in Paris, there is a run on the director.... sometimes resulting in the appearance of a second film — probably of indifferent quality.

The advantages and the dangers of such a set-up are obvious. The danger can only be averted, partially, by raising the standard of film culture — we must insist on the word *film* culture — of the 9,000 first viewers who, whether through habit, surroundings, flair, culture or imitativeness, have some kind of taste.

You may say that this is not the only tom-tom. Of course it is not. But it is the most efficacious, the most rapid.

There is also publicity: but publicity is rapidly defeating its own ends. The organised obscenities to which we are treated to-day will not save the power of publicity. The public will not allow itself to be duped at every turn, and the insolent pornography of certain posters will not live. In passing, this is an opportunity of remarking that while the tom-tom of the 9,000 enthusiasts is aimed mainly at the intelligence — even through so squalid a channel as snobbery — the tom-tom of publicity is aimed at the basest instincts. We have no illusions on this point, from the ignoble use of the "Forbidden to Children" label to the display of the salacious poster, alleged to be taken from the film.

On this foundation — the principle of the efficacy of the nine or twelve thousand — the *Association Française de la Critique du Cinéma* has just established a "Try-Out" Cinema in a beautiful hall in the Ternes in Paris, "Les Reflets", perfectly equipped and able to put on the most difficult programmes.

The "Try-Out" Cinema will run to an artfully conceived plan: we critics are to choose our own programmes. Being consistent, we shall justify our choice by press, wireless and even television. During the week's run — our films will all run for a week, regardless of their reception — the control of the tom-tom will, in theory, be in our hands. In this way we hope to influence and canalise the tastes and tendencies of these nine or twelve thousand chosen spectators.

For once the problem is squarely posed. But the matter is one of extreme delicacy, and allows of no complacency under pain of losing all influence on the destiny of the cinema.

In our view, the first essential, with priority over all considerations of the moral order, is good cinema. Our Trojan Horse — if horse there be — must be good cinema. The prime need is to keep a minimum of power in our own hands, and our power would be undermined by any extra-cinematic compromise. We must insist on good cinema so that one day we may be in a position to suggest the making of (morally) good films.

THE DECALOGUE OF AN ARTIST

by Gabriela Mistral

I. *Thou shalt love beauty which is the shadow of God on earth.*

II. *There is no atheistic art. Even if thou dost not love the Creator, thou shalt love what is created in his likeness.*

III. *Thou shalt not lead beauty to pasture among the senses, unless it be the natural nourishment of the soul.*

IV. *Beauty shall not be to thee a pretext for outrage and vanity but a heavenly inspiration.*

V. *Thou shalt not seek beauty in the market place nor pursue there thy work, for beauty is virgin and she who frequents the market place is not.*

VI. *Her song shall rise in thy heart and she will purify thee — thee first of all.*

VII. *Beauty shall be called merciful and bring comfort to the hearts of men.*

VIII. *Thou shalt labour like a son to her, giving her thy life's blood.*

IX. *Beauty shall not be as a stupifying narcotic but as a generous wine, warming thee for action, for if thou shouldest cease to be man or woman thou art no longer an artist.*

X. *All thy work shall leave thee dissatisfied for never shall they satisfy thy dreams.*

TELEVISION

The filmmakers' newest and perhaps greatest opportunity

by

DON L. KEARNEY

Don L. KEARNEY *had been in commercial radio for three years as a commentator and writer before he received his B. A. degree from Fordham University in 1939. Since then he has been in all phases of radio — writing, production and sales — climaxed as national sales manager of cooperative programs for the Mutual Broadcasting System in 1948. He made the transition to Television over a year ago and now heads the sales staff of the largest American firm in the TV station representation field. He spent 4½ years in the U. S. Army during World War II as a Radio officer, though he participated in three European campaigns as an infantry troop commander in General Patton's 3rd U. S. Army. He was a radio officer at headquarters of Generals Bradley and Eisenhower and worked closely on shortwave broadcasting problems with Radiodiffusion Française in the period following liberation and V-E Day. He was also the officer in charge of the press and radio galleries at the trials of the International Military Tribunal, Nurnberg.*

With 1949 at the half-way mark, there were 72 television stations operating in forty-one American cities. The greatest concentration of these stations is in the northeastern section of the country — where the bulk of the population is — and most of these northeastern cities are joined by either coaxial cable or micro-wave relays which make it possible for New York programs, for example, to be seen in fourteen other cities. Television receivers in homes will number well over 2,000,000 by the first of 1950 — there being over 750,000 in New York alone as this is written. When you realize that receivers average $ 300 each, an idea can be gained of not only the healthy state of American economy, but the tremendous enthusiasm with which Americans have taken to this great new medium of entertainment, information and education.

In the United States a branch of the government, the Federal Communications Commission, allocates channels to be used and then awards station licences to individuals or corporations who apply, proving that they have the high intention of telecasting in the public interest, convenience and necessity, that they have or can employ the technical skill to build and operate a station and, naturally very important, the financial reservoir to pay for the construction and operating expenses, until such time as advertising revenue can make the station self-supporting — and profitable. All TV stations currently operating are commercial stations — will be paid for and operated from revenue paid to the owner by advertisers for dissemination of their advertising message. If the American telecasting system were not commercial, there'd be few investors interested in paying $ 500,000 or more to put TV stations into operation. And merely government or state operated television would be as contrary to American tradition, which prizes freedom of speech and expression, as would be a state or government controlled press. Television in the United States, then, is more than an entertainment, information and education function — it is a costly advertising enterprise. And because it exceeds any other advertising medium in versatility and effectiveness, combining as it does the visual appeal of newspaper and magazine advertising with the aural appeal of radio — and then adding motion and immediacy, qualities all its own — it has captured the fancy of manufacturers with products or services to sell. In like fashion it has captured the American home and the family with a TV set finds that social life revolves more and more about the home, with motion picture theaters, night clubs and other outside places of entertainment getting less and less attention. This is, of course, a good and healthy influence. Consequently, Television is actually the most dynamic single element in the entire American life and economy at present — and it bids fair to remain so for many a day and year.

Before we look at Television programs and methods of programming, a look behind the financial scenes is in order. Programs cost money, and to understand why the standard of programming is at present behind the technical and popularity advances, an understanding of the bookkeeping of TV is necessary.

The biggest TV stations are in New York and Chicago. They not only house studios for New York programs, but for the big extravaganzas which travel by cable and relay to other cities in the land. So their cost of construction is not average. But an average station, in Toledo, Ohio, viewable for a radius of approximately sixty miles in which area about 500,000 people live, cost nearly $ 500,000 to *construct*. The 560-foot tower from which the TV signal emanates cost about $ 60,000 — that figure *not* including purchase of the land on which the tower is built, nor installation of cables, transmitting equipment, etc. A New York station tower alone costs $ 200,000. So Television is a very expensive undertaking for the station owner.

Once his station is transmitting a picture and sound, this station owner has to pay a staff, keep the equipment in working order, and supply programs.

The FCC requires a minimum amount of operating time for TV stations, as follows :

Length of time in operation	Minimum hours per day	Minimum days per week	Min. total hours per week
1 to 18 months	2	5	12
18 to 24 months	2	5	16
24 to 30 months	2	5	20
30 to 36 months	2	5	24
36 months and thereafter	2	7	28

In actual practice virtually all stations on the air operate considerably more than these minima. In addition, most stations telecast an identifying slide known as the test pattern at various times during the day when program service is not being provided.

The test pattern is telecast primarily to assist service men making receiver installations. Many stations now transmit recorded music and news reports behind their test pattern, as an additional service to both the set owner and the serviceman.

Our station owner pays for the programs and for players, actors, singers, sports announcers and others who appear on the screen as well as the many more who are behind the scenes — the engineers, cameramen, writers, directors, stage hands etc. Of fourteen stations which operated through the twelve months of 1948, the average operating cost was $ 540,000. Of these the highest was $ 814,000 and the lowest $ 59,000. As the TV audience grow, advertisers take over sponsorship of the programs, paying the salaries of those who produce, write and appear, and also paying the station for the air-time used.

At this writing, most of the commercial (sponsored) programs are produced in studios. Portions of them, sometimes, are on film — an outdoor sequence in a dramatic presentation will occasionally be fitted into the «live» parts of the show. But the most popular programs at present are all «live». Milton Berle and Arthur Godfrey, the former a graduate of vaudeville and the latter from the radio studios, are the two leading TV personalities in the country. There are a number of fine dramatic programs — mostly thirty-minute or one-hour presentations — and the quality of writing, performance and production technique improves each week. The Ford Motor Company presents the «Ford Theater» once a month, and beginning in January, this $ 20,000.-per-program feature will be presented twice a month.

Telecasts of sports events are very popular; more people than ever are seeing baseball games, and TV has brought a new lease of life to wrestling and boxing. Horse races, trotting races, track and field meetings, tennis matches, golf and football are seen in season and TV has even developed a following for newer sporting spectacles, particulary roller skating derbys.

Studio programs of every conceivable type have been originated by stations and networks, news, variety, children's, quiz, drama, women's program· are among the many types which have been telecast. While ome have been better than others, for the most part these program types borrowed from radio experience have met with favorable response. Other program formats have been adapted from the stage; still others spring from sources so far untapped by either radio or the legitimate theatre — puppet shows, hobby or «how-to-do-it» programs, fashion shows and many others. Little or no significant experimental work has been done on religious programs. Programs that have been traditional radio audience-killers such as forums, discussions and talks on new life because the participants appear on the television screen and their actions and reactions add entertainment to the educational values.

Producing an average television program requires approximately four times the staff needed for an audio program and much more costly facilities ; casting, sets, visual and sound effects, rehearsals, direction and productions are far more complex in television than in radio. There can be little doubt that television is, and will continue to be, more expensive than radio. But it seems equally clear that television's effectiveness in entertainment and sales is, and will continue to be, commensurate with its costs.

It is far too early to indicate the directions television programming will take. New ideas and techniques are constantly evolving and steady improvement is evident. Both live and film programming have their advantages.

Many observers feel that the best values of television can be obtained only by live programming, pointing out that spontaneity and immediacy are above all the essence of the television art. In contrast are the film enthusiasts who feel top programming demands filming scene by scene, retakes, cutting and editing before the finished program is ready.

As television matures, it will probably draw heavily upon the advantages of both film and live programming. As networks and the number of stations expand, live programming will be extended, but films will certainly remain a basic part of television's program fare and there is no doubt in the minds of TV leaders that in the future, a large portion of program time on Television will be taken up by the projection of motion picture films *specially made for Television. At present*, however, such specially prepared films are simply too expensive.

And so while film makes up a large percentage of all TV programming in the United States, a minute part of that total is film made especially for TV. The first series of what we will call «TV Films» was presented by the NBC (National Broadcasting Company) TV network in 1948, and called «Special Prosecutor». These 30 minute films were produced on a very small budget (Hollywood standards) of $ 8,000. per picture. The economy showed and while the quality was better than many of the «live» studio drama productions on TV at the time, it no suffered by comparison to the Hollywood movie-theater films to which Americans were accustomed that they were unsponsored, and unpopular with the TV audience. The series came to an early end. During the 1948/49 season a group of smaller Hollywood producers made 26 half-hour TV film features averaging $ 10,000. each. They were sold to the American Tobacco Company, which sponsored them each week on the NBC-TV network. But they failed to audiences comparable to other studio programs and hence, of less value to the advertiser — always most interested in attracting largest possible audiences to his advertising message — the series ended after twenty-six weeks. They were all costume and period films, stories selected from the writings of Robert Louis Stevenson, de Maupassant, J. M. Barrie, and other American and European writers. Inexpensively adapted, and produced on discarded Hollywood sets with lesser known actors and actresses who received the minimum scale, most of them were shot in less than two days. The producers made little or no profit.

The Hollywood film industry's reluctance to divert its production from theater-movie making is so great that the larger studios have made *no* films specially for Television. Unquestionably more film production for Television use will be forthcoming in the future as the growth of the audience (and advertising expenditures) encourages motion picture firms to produce for the new medium. Several have already announced their intention to do so, but the field is still virtually open; the big motion picture studios hate to realize that TV is removing customers from their theaters, a situation in which TV is assisted by the dubious quality of most recent Hollywood products. For Television appeared in the home just when Americans were getting tired of what they saw in the neighborhood movie theater. The movie industry has released very few of its better or newer films to TV. TV can neither pay enough the rental of these films to make it profitable to the movie producers, nor do the producers welcome TV's competition with their

movie theaters. Despite the fact that a lot of ancient and third-rate western and mystery thrillers are on TV every day, films produced for standard theater release have usually been unsatisfactory for TV. The limitations of the Television screen (most sets in use today have 10 inch tubes) are far greater than the motion picture screen. Many scenes have too much detail and too many long shots for satisfactory TV reception.

All TV stations are equipped, of course, to telecast films. In all cases 16 mm. equipment is available, only a few are station equipped for 35 mm. projection. 16 mm. equipment and operation is considerably less expensive and requires no special storage problems or expensive operators. As a result, programs produced on 16 mm. film are assured of proper handling by TV stations; those produced on 35 mm. are not.

Where film has gained the predominant and probably enduring place in TV is in presentation of the advertiser's message — the commercial. These are either a part of a long program or about twenty and sixty second films sandwiched between programs. Advertisers prefer films to «live» commercials for displaying their products and services because they feel that best results can be obtained from the cutting and editing which film permits. Furthermore, they know that their film commercial will be of uniform quality wherever it is telecast.

Costs for good one-minute film commercials vary. Advertisers have spent less than $ 100 and as much as several thousand dollars to produce a single one-minute commercial. There is no set price. Final cost depends on a number of factors, from the cost of the script to the number of props required. Use of studio or exterior shots, animation or live performers, narrative or lip-sync — these are some of the variables that affect costs.

A number of film companies — smaller ones, not major Hollywood studios — are turning to the production of TV commercials, while several firms have been started to do this work exclusively. The cost factor, as already noted, is extremely flexible. For example, one film company made a set of three one-minute commercials for a national advertiser at a total cost of $ 525, or $ 175 each. This low price was possible because of the open middle construction, a process which allows the advertiser to produce a set of commercials all having the same opening and closing, although each one uses a different center portion. Since it is only necessary to shoot the opening and closing portions once, production costs are pared. Other processes are more expensive. Another commercial film produced by the same company cost $ 1,000, since there was a great deal of location work and a large cast involved.

Many TV stations are equipped to assist advertisers in producing commercials at low cost. One station for example, will produce a one-minute film for advertisers at a cost of less than $ 100. The station will also print duplicates for about $ 10 each.

As more stations become qualified to turn out film commercials and as the commercial film companies increase their TV experience, advertisers anticipate lower prices for commercials on film — and better commercials as well.

Making commercials, then, is the one really profitable place of Television for filmdom's creative and production people.

There is another use of film for Television, but it's of interest, at present chiefly to manufacturers of raw film. That is the process of «kinescope recording» by which programs are photographed on sound film directly from the tube of a television receiver and, after processing, shipped to stations not connected by cable or relay with the originating point. There the program is retelecast at a later date. It's the Television counterpart of the radio recording and, while individual recording methods differ slightly (both film companies and Television stations are in this reproduction business) in technical detail, they all afford a means of reproducing one program on many stations.

Television, despite its youth, is a gigantic industry. It's the most powerful force yet developed for entertaining, informing and educating. Perhaps it can be the greatest force for «Peace on Earth to Men of Good Will». It certainly presents an artistic and technical challenge to those men and women whose calling is to tell a story on celluloid.

PIERRE LEPROHON

"...Where the Spirit Breathes..."

When Ingrid Bergman, having incarnated the role of Joan of Arc with so much conscientious fervour, came to France she made a journey to the places made famous by the Maid — to Domrémy, to Vaucouleurs, to Orléans, to Rouen — a journey that must have been very moving for the actress.

N. B. This article was written when we learned that the "Tele Productions" group was planning a series of short films intended for American television about "European Pilgrimages".

Jean George Auriol and Michel Ferry were in charge of the artistic side of these productions, the first of which has already been made with the support of the Central Holy Year Committee. Its subject is Rome. The other films to be made will include Lourdes, Lisieux, Compostella, Assisi, Turin.

This journey which Ingrid Bergman made, thousands and thousands of pilgrims have made before her.

From every corner of France and from the whole world, people of every kind have come and knelt where the Saint prayed and dwelt and died. Others will come in like manner as long as our Christian civilisation lasts. It will be the same at Lourdes, at Lisieux, at Rome, at Jerusalem — wherever the presence or the will of God has been manifested.

It is because the place where a miracle has occurred holds for our eyes something of the atmosphere of the event of which it was the theatre.

As one's flesh retains the mark of the iron which burnt it, the sun and the countryside, the light and the house seem to bear the imprint of the heavenly choice. The point of contact between the creature and the Creator is henceforth sacred — it is not just a figure of speech that makes one speak of Holy Places or Holy Ground — and even before they begin to build the edifices that will consecrate the memory of the event for posterity, men gather in crowds where God made His rendezvous in order to recall His Presence, in order to discover one knows not what message.

The idea of pilgrimage is, therefore, as old as Christianity but it is not exclusively Christian. Pilgrimages are known to take place in India and in places of Mohammedan worship. Nor is it purely a religious practice. It seems to date from the most remote times, from the time when a kind of instinct induced man to believe that some vestige of the soul still clung for good or ill to the place of his earthly adventures. The "haunted spot" is an old belief and many religious and other teachings are prepared to accord authenticity to this idea of attachment of the soul to its milieu. On the Christian plane the persistance of miracles at Lourdes for example, is evidence of a certain connection between the place and the efficacy of faith. One recalls the saying of Maurice Barrès: "It is one of the places where the spirit has breathed."

* * *

The longer the world lasts and the greater the development of knowledge, the more we feel that we live within a boundary of appearance beyond which a thousand secrets wait to be discovered. This primacy of the invisible world leads us to think that pilgrimage is not a delusion. What is it the pilgrim goes to seek — merely the setting of a story — the traces of the past — or is it not rather a witness — a *Presence?*

A biography of St. Francis tells the story of a poor Italian friar whose hermitage was visited by a prelate who seemed disappointed at not finding anything dating from the days of Poverello. The good father extending his arms to point to the valley and the fields, said modestly "There is of course the air".

It was not just a whim. The world is full of hidden presences and it is towards these that the crowds turn, drawn by the hope of a communion with the Invisible. Great souls leave traces which are by no means destroyed after they have passed on and which stimulate the fervour of those who glorify them. If such pilgrimage is religious, it is after the manner of Christ; no message is nobler, no spirit more powerful than those of the saint whose life may be said to be a long dialogue with Heaven. They have never sullied the place of their sojourn; they have kindled beacons here and there over the old Christian earth, at Rome, Assisi, Avila, Lisieux, Ars and many other spots which continue to light up our darkness.

* * *

Much could be written about the social importance of the idea of pilgrimage, on its historical significance. The Crusades which were to have such an influence on the artistic life of the West were the outcome of the idea of a journey to the Holy Places. The custom of pilgrimages has transformed villages, built sanctuaries and brought cities into being. It has upset destinies, given birth to vocations, healed bodies and saved souls. Though it may have lost something of its popular appeal it still retains the ardour of a large number of the faithful. It has found with Scouting and conducted tours a new application and a new fervour.

But the importance of the role which the cinema could play in resurrecting the idea of pilgrimage does not seem to have been much considered. Pilgrimage is not just an act of faith, it is also a partaking in a collective act of faith in which our own discovers new energies. It is necessary to have seen the crowds at Lourdes in order to understand the power of such faith.

Pilgrimage also gives us a better grasp of the message of the Saints. You cannot completely understand the mission of Joan of Arc without knowing France, or penetrate the soul of St. Francis without having gone about Umbria. For these places have become what the lives of their saints have made them.

* * *

The cinema, by means of its ubiquity and power of presenting the visual image could propagate the idea of pilgrimage. As to the man longing for escape, the thought of the country of which he dreams, the cinema provides the Christian, together with the sight of the places made famous by miracles and the spread of the faith, a source of mediation and joy.

The very reasons that have brought the pilgrimage centre into existence ensure that there is no question of replacing the journey by the film — indeed what more eloquent invitation to make the journey? Especially if the artistic value of the film is such as to evoke something of the emotional witness of the reality, able to provide him

who sees it with a glimpse of that "presence" or that communion which the pilgrim goes a long way to experience.

The pilgrimage film, then, constitutes at one and the same time a witness, a lesson, an invitation and in a certain measure an experience of the emotion and spirituel benefit of the pilgrimage which it illustrates.

It is surprising therefore that world-wide production offers it so little space. In the essay on "The Witness of the Catholic Cinema in France" published in this Review last year, Jean Morienval cited several well thought of films as the first examples of pilgrimage films. These were the two series of scenes of the National Pilgrimage to Lourdes taken by Pathé and Gaumont about 1903, the newsreels by Lear and Father Paul de Bailly taken prior to 1914 of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the film of Father Honoré on Lourdes and Lisieux, the *Croisière Sainte au Pays du Christ* by Father Danion in 1920 *Pilgrimage to Lourdes and La Salette* made by L'Etoile-Film of Lyon etc.

It is true most of these films are essentially news reels. That is one method but not the only one with the films of which we dream. Since the reels we have mentioned all date from the silent cinema, others must certainly have been made with the same idea of testimony though there is not as far as I know a really worth while film about Lourdes.

* * *

This first kind of film is not to be despised. It has a documentary value in that it is useful as evidence but it only deals with pilgrimage in so far as it is a social manifestation and not as it is, a spiritual experience. Since it is the most popular (and perhaps the most moving) of pilgrimages, Lourdes has attracted the cineasts from the earliest days.

Even if one wished to restrict oneself to reportage, what kind of film would it have to be that was content merely to photograph the crowds and the ceremonies without giving an impression of the fervour of the crowds, the purpose of the ceremonies — what film could leave out the passionate problem of suffering and the faith it evokes?

In the same category of live reporting we shall find great interest in the reels — which were something other than revised extracts — dealing with the great foreign pilgrimages — among them those of St. James of Compostella in Spain, the famous pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico and many others of whose existence we were till then ignorant! Religious documents, ethnological documents, human documents and in these films we saw how the faith expresses itself across the world and that the fervour which animates it has as many forms of expression as there are different kinds of people to maintain it.

While we are waiting the realisation of the ideas we have spoken of — and perhaps one day somebody will really do something about it — Catholic cineastes may find in Rome during the Holy Year plenty of beautiful subjects. Several films have been made about the Holy Father and the Vatican. It is possible this time to take advantage of an actual event, to demand that the camera serve as a witness capable of carrying to the other side of the world the echo of this new affirmation of Catholic reality.

* * *

In talking of "pilgrimage films" we are thinking of another way in which the reason for the pilgrimage itself can be expressed. It is not likely that the film itself would have been envisaged on a religious basis but it is possible to find examples of this kind in what are called "art documentaries." Two books among them will suffice to make clear what we mean: "Les Chemins de Lamartine" by Jean Tedesco dating from 1942/3 and more recently "Combourg, Visage de pierre" by J. de Casembroot, two studies undertaken in the style of those who inspired them — Lamartine and Chateaubriand. By means of scenes from Milly, Savoy and the Lake of Bourget, the first makes us familiar with the spots dear to the romantic poet and gives us at the same time some ideas of his aspect and his inspiration. In the second, J. de Casembroot illustrates the text of souvenirs from Chateaubriand with glimpses of certain of the places evoked in the text — a method which imparts to the films a character which is sometimes dramatic and always moving.

These two films are in fact, pilgrimage films. They themselves constitute a cinematographic pilgrimage and the impression they leave us with is actually that of a presence pervading this scenery, these old walls where the soul of the poet and that of the writer seem still to float, mingled with the air and the silence. We have already said that the idea of pilgrimage is not solely religious. Wherever great souls have lived there today the spirit breathes.

This category of cinematography appears to us exactly suitable to religious motifs. We have chosen the two examples above because of their unity and discretion. Foregoing all idea of "reconstitution of period", always liable to be shocking, and by using contemporary etchings or

portraits, especially useful for film biography, the authors of these two small films have confined themselves to the places as they are today; nevertheless they succeed in suggesting the presence of their heroes by means of camera movement, by their way of viewing things and, consequently, by their method of showing these things to others. Before them Louis Cuny in *Rouen, Naissance d'une Cité* had thus suggested the progress of Joan to the fire. Technical tricks? Yes, but it is by such that films are made to come alive and to express ideas.

Looked at from this point of view, is there any need to underline the rich material available to the pilgrimage film? Every Christian country has its saints and sanctuaries. And in the first place after so many more or less romanticised "Golgothas" what cineast will undertake to film the scenes that wait to be discovered today by one following in the steps of Christ? Granted here above all one is faced with a problem of great delicacy which all such filmings pose: the profound and sometimes almost total transformation of original sites. But this transformation is itself one of the subjects of the film. An intelligent commentary is able to contrast the present day scenes with the evocation of yesterday's atmosphere and if certain places have been quite changed by the building of sanctuaries demanded by the needs of piety, there are many others where one can still see the very hill, the side of the lake, the modest threshold where Jesus halted his steps for a moment and even faces similar to those which listened to Him. Present day reality is not without interest. We would like the camera to show us the Garden of Olives, the Via Dolorosa and Calvary as they are after twenty centuries, filled with so much faith, love and fraticidal hatred, have passed over them.

The footsteps of the saints often more accessible to us, less disputed, are more easy to retrace. One can imagine the emotion that a film pilgrimage made in the childhood country of Joan of Arc would arouse in France. Here we have not only the house, the church, but the streams, the meadows whither the young girl led her flock, the foliage populated with heavenly voices, the curves of the hillocks, the narrow defiles where Joan went on horseback. About these walls, in this corner of France "there is an atmosphere" as the good Father has said, that all work of research and reconstitution of Victor Fleming in his *Joan of Arc* has not and could not reproduce.

After Domrémy there is Lisieux where so many witnesses of the life of Thérèse still live; there is Ars, there is Amettes, the country of Benedict Labre, the pilgrim saint; so many places that have become cities of prayer, La Salette, la Sainte-Baume, les Saintes-Maries.

In Italy there are almost too many subjects to be mentioned: Catherine of Sienna, Angèle at Foligno, Margaret at Cortone, Anthony at Padua, Benedict at Subiaco, Don Bosco at Turin, Francis and Clare at Assisi. Francis is present in the sanctuaries built by those who came after him just as he is present in the Umbrian countryside, down the roads of which he went singing. Films have been made about Assisi. It still remains to make the film which will show us Franciscan Umbria, a film which is something other than an amiable succession of tableaux, a film in which we shall be aware of the presence of the Little Poor Man. Luigi Commencini, the director of *Proibito Rubare*, is working on a life of Saint Francis and Saint Clare which will perhaps achieve this objective at least in part, though it must be remembered that a film biography is something different from a pilgrimage film. In the meantime it is possible to tell the story of a life by means of the places in which it was lived, as Luciano Emmer has told the life of Christ with the aid of the frescos of Giotto.

* * *

Are films of this kind a commercial proposition? In the first place let it be clear that we are thinking of short films — not longer than two reels. Subjects requiring greater length can always be divided into several parts.

There have been many short films during recent years devoted to writers (Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Rimbaud: *Bateau Ivre*); to painters, (Matisse, Van Gogh, Rubens); to savants (Branly, Pasteur); to musicians (Hommage à Bizet). Have not the saints as great a favour among the public, justifying this creation of film which would meet with a welcome at least as great ?

Though it is not exactly biographical, the kind of film we have in mind has an additional attraction, that of travel and could be usefully sponsored by certain commercial films. Made directly in 16mm. and later blown up to 35mm. these little films of which the price will not be excessive would benefit by increasing the output for private cinemas.

As much for the general public as for the Christian public, they would greatly foster the idea of pilgrimage. It is also possible that the cinema would find here a subject capable of inspiring films as beautiful as the "art documentaries" and accepted as standard.

The places of contact between the human and the divine, the spots at which the Blessed Virgin has appeared, the surroundings of the lives of the saints are always situated in countryside of a strange nobility, as if God wished to show us that the Faith is nourished by it. Let us learn from this the lesson that the artist should always be asked to be worthy of the work confided to him! A pilgrimage film will only be valuable if it is made most conscientiously, with much tact, talent and, let us say it — with faith! The need to make a thing popular should not be a pretext for being banal, and if the subject is badly expressed the work is worthless.

As with all sacred art, the cinema will serve the faith in the measure to which it is faithful to the rules of its æsthetic. It is time that we understood and said how much harm sulpician art had done to religion. Let the cinema be saved from renewing so unfortunate an error.

MARCEL HURET
Doctor of law, film publicist, Paris.

YOUTH AND THE CINEMA

THE GREATNESS AND FRUSTRATION OF THE FILM PROFESSION

The expression of movement in art can be traced over the last two thousand years and the basic technique of the modern cinema, the animated cartoon, is really as old as the hills. The evidence for this is not confined to the pictorial art — the Bayeux tapestry is a picture of movement, the frescoes of Giotto embody a rhythm that rightly belongs to the cinema, the works of Brueghel and Degas express an earlier conception of movement and the style of Proust gives us copious examples of the cinema idiom.

The last fifty years have witnessed the establishment of the modern cinema. There is only one adult generation which, in its youth, has experienced and known the revelation of an all-powerful art — an art laden with fascination even in our materialistic age. How can we expect youth not to be enthusiastically attracted to this new profession? How can they help feeling isolated and at variance with established and traditional values ?

Today we find sons of judges and lawyers wanting to become film directors, girls entering the films as a profession, engineers forsaking traditional careers to become film technicians. Authors, too, dream of wielding their pens in the service of the film and priests feel the vocation to missionary work which can be expressed through the medium of the cinema. Family life has become coloured by the new atmosphere created by the modern film story. The danger of transporting the manners and disturbing events displayed on the screen, into the private lives of the actors and actresses causes a confused attitude of mind amongst many modern cinema audiences. This same attitude was expressed in the olden days by excommunicating actors from the Christian community and the hangover of this spirit of disfavour is to be found in the generai attitude towards members of the film profession.

However, stigmatism has never yet succeeded in deterring the sincere members of any true profession. The mistrust of the film professional is not entirely without foundation — "Where there is smoke there is fire." Gradually the travelling peep-show has become an industrial art and the enterprising seek all they can get from "the goose that lays the golden eggs." The conduct of numbers of cinema financiers has often been open to well-founded criticism, furthermore, certain sociological investigations have confirmed that the cinema has exerted a corrupting influence — nonentities have become celebrities overnight, borne on golden wings of publicity — American typists have become film stars without any real talent to justify their success — the fairytale of Cinderella is an every day occurence in the never-never land of Hollywood — feather-brained girls fall asleep in bedrooms, the walls decorated with phoney photographs, to dream of becoming film-stars. Whilst all this is quite true, yet it still may be a real vocation. Missionaries have never set out to evangelise savages anticipating a sinecure — yet there are still those who respond to a missionary vocation.

With time, the cinema has now become a serious profession, the revolutionary period is over and honest men are coming to bring order out of chaos. It is due to their efforts that the cinema has survived and is now coming to maturity. For a long time, alongside the mushroom-growth production companies with non-existent capital, the hangers-on, the often licentious productions, there have been those workers in every branch of the profession who have

given loving service to this magic industry which mirrors life and enhances illusion.

In the mystery of the studio it is thrilling for the camera man to have complete power over shadow and light. It is exciting for the set-designer to make roads or sections of a town and to watch them come to life, the magic of lighting on plaster giving the illusion of damp and glistening pavements. It is fascinating for the editor to blend, at will, the past, the present and the future, to rearrange time with scissors and divide space with a pair of tweezers and gum. For the actor, too, the illusion of the cinema brings its measure of the miraculous: personalities multiply, youth and wrinkles become interchangeable — the cutting room is a place where the laws of chronology can be ignored.

The attraction of so many mysteries is understandable. The cinema is a modern alchemy and its practice brings delight. While for many the profession is an end in itself for others it represents more: it is a means of expression of unknown power, it is the greatest universal language invented by man since the beginning of the world.

It is this that, to the young Catholic working in the filming profession, gives the key to a religious vocation. What an exciting invitation a universal language offers to carry far and wide the message of Christ! The cinema, the "Opium of the People" can become a means of awakening them to Christianity. Can we not hope to prevent the damage that films might do? Can we not hope to humanise the violence and spiritualise the tendencies? For too long Catholics have lacked interest in this power to influence thought. All they have done is to fix black lists on Church doors, but most people don't even look at these warnings. Wouldn't it be better to try and lead the way ?

It is thus that work in films can become a missionary enterprise. The hearts of many young Catholics in 1950 are filled with the desire to turn towards God the camera that would ignore Him, the hope of harnessing the power of the Cinema for the salvation of Man and a dream of creating a film that can be an act of thanksgiving. Moreover, like their atheistic colleagues, and because they are as other men, they like the film for its own sake. They know its infinite appeal — they are children of this century.

Unfortunately this appeal is like a lighthouse that shines in the night. The distance that separates the idea of a vocation from its effective fulfilment, is impossible to assess. Film making in Europe is going through such a crisis that entry to the profession seems closed. Entry to the film industry is blocked by the opposition of those already employed and the defence mechanism of the unemployed professional. There is no direct road that leads to success ! No professional guarantees are given. The assistant director considers himself lucky if he can work on one or two films in a year, between times he has to live by other means. The cinema, in France, has become a seasonal occupation which consequently has its off periods. The technician is only sure of regular employment when he is famous, and to have become famous means that his problem is already solved. He must have possessed real talent and have been able to apply himself to his work long enough to make a niche for himself in the profession. To "endure" these conditions means sacrifice, patience and more often than not, compromise. It implies a bohemian life for himself and his family and it entails a slow deadening of the spirit of enthusiasm from contact with malice, dishonesty and corruption. "Enduring it" invariably means resigning oneself to inferior jobs, prostituting talent to mediocre production of stupid and even unpleasant works. Maurice Cloche, the French producer, waited patiently for 15 years before he could show his true capabilities in "Monsieur Vincent".

There are some who, to join the profession in spite of all this, and because they cannot use the stage door obtain jobs in the offices of film companies. These people wait in vain for their opportunities, making up accounts and immersed in records and files. These people think that they have penetrated the Citadel: but while they may be inside they are condemned to a type of work which will make it even more difficult for them to reach their objective than those who temporarily have given up all ideas of getting in.

In the face of so many obstacles only those with a strong sense of vocation can stand up to the corrosive action of disgust and discouragement. By a process of ruthless selection all those are eliminated who are too ignorant, too impatient, too pushing, or whose family responsibilities make it impossible for them to wait too long for success.

In a country such as France, the cinema industry can only employ 50 directors and as many camera men, a dozen designers, 40 scenario writers and adapters. These are always the same ones and they defend their positions with the exclusiveness of the Mandarins of ancient China. Several thousands of secondary technicians still find fairly stable and regular work. The remainder work irregularly, and have to find work for the rest of the time in sister professions. Screen comedians go on the stage; scenario writers take to journalism, technicians turn to radio and television. Success in the film industry is as much of a gamble as winning a prize in a lottery !

Frustration brings with it many problems, and family friction often arises with the conventional father triumphantly saying "I told you so! This mountebank profession is no career". If only these parents had open minds on this subject they would repeat to young film aspirants these words of the writer Saint Exupery: "You know your vocation and what it means to you. If you betray it you will mark your soul. Realise that integrity will grow slowly in you, for it is like the growth of a tree, not the stumbling on a formula. Time plays a great part in it for you must grow into a different person and you have before you a difficult climb up the mountainside....."1)

In climbing that mountain many lose their enthusiasm. The sons of lawyers, discouraged, return dejectedly to take their fathers' advice. Others devote themselves to commerce or agriculture. A few spoil their lives. Some console themselves by amateur activities of holiday film making. Those who will attain the summit of the mountain will perhaps lose their youth on the way. They will get caught in the quicksands, while those, stronger than all the rest will *transform the cinema.* Their integrity will have "developed slowly" — but it will then appear all powerful, far greater even than their talent — only then can it become successfully and conqueringly creative. For this Youth must courageously undertake the ascent.

---

1) Saint-Exupéry : *Citadelle.*

Jean CHATAIGNER
President-founder of the FI. PRES. CI.
Paris.

IN ORDER TO BECOME THE BEST

Film can and must play a primary and highly effective role in the development of peoples to-day.

Since the cinema first became an important force and the lighted screen penetrated to the four corners of the earth, since an ever larger audience has been attracted into its ever vaster halls, which provide an ever greater degree of comfort, thousands of feet of comedy, drama, documentary film, animated cartoon and fantasy have been produced, always with an eye to the box-office.

The facile and astonishing success enjoyed by this new form of visual entertainment caused producers to seek to give the public what it wanted and to pander to the dubious taste of audiences; to take as mentor the financial result accruing to one or another set formula, thereby creating a fashion that would be blindly followed for periods of varying length.

True, certain courageous spirits attempted to escape from this stifling environment, and their brave efforts resulted in productions which enjoyed unequal success, but which all had new trends and new processes and were bravely empirical. These efforts were not always financially rewarding: departing from the accepted formula as they did and thereby bewildering a passive clientele, they could hardly be so.

Should they be dispensed with?

Certainly not. In a solidly constructed industry organised so that experimental films benefit from the excess profits of current distribution there is room for bold experiment and little risk of serious loss. In this way, developments of all kinds are made possible, and they need not detract from the efforts made to keep a high standard in current production.

Too often, alas, films are vehicles for a complacent display based on dubious moral standards. In films we are shown too many «spivs» and too many ladies of light virtue, too many suggestive pictures of semi-nude stars whose physical attributes are prized above their acting ability.

Is the remedy then to set up a strict censorship which would forbid the showing of haunts of vice, the glorification of gangster prowess and the glamourisation of the gold digger? No.

The remedy, already being called into practice, is to clean up the output of each country, by agreement between men of good will and sound moral standards; to show on the screen noble actions and fine characters, and the daily round of the people of various lands, whose way of life is not all baseness. The defenders of the cinema as it is to-day will say that we are trying to stultify it and to take away its freedom and hedge it around with senseless restrictions. How wrong they will be.

Mud is not the best material from which to fashion works of art, and it is possible to create characters and to develop themes whose aim is not the glorification of man's baser instincts: the adventurer and his camp follower can be shown for what they are by being contrasted with decent men and women.

The attitude of those who wish to see the cinema become less debased should not be purely negative, and there is no need to lay down rigid rules.

Neither is it necessary to fall into the opposite excess of wanting to change the whole industry from top to bottom at one stroke.

It is, however, as well to tell the cinema's huge clientele what is planned. Spiritual authorities should co-operate with lay authorities in warning producers of the growing danger.

Without interfering with the cinema's right to ceaseless development, efforts should be made to prevent its being, for whatever reason, a sadly efficacious teacher of amorality and error.

This difficult but not impossible task can only be tackled successfully by groups that are strong both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Only organs such as the International Film Review will be capable of supporting them and helping to bring about the triumph of the true friends of the screen; those who believe that, being at the same time the best and the worst of things, it must cease to be the worst in order to become the best. The Holy Year, which encourages the noblest feelings throughout the world, cannot but foster this endeavour.

Jean George AURIOL †
Founder and director of "La Revue du Cinéma", Paris.

BEYOND PICTURES

Griffith..... *once again it is to him that we must turn, towards his achievement that we must look to find the source of one of the finest aspirations of the cinema: the revelation of character, of the interior life and of the soul. Not merely the making clear on the face of a human being, conceived in the image of God, what that person is experiencing, desires or decides to do, but expressing the interior workings of a mind, a dream or a thought.*

We must, in fact, recall the amazement of Louis Delluc, thirty years ago; and then our own feeling and curiosity when confronted with a Lillian Gish, in whom D. W. Griffith, closely attentive, saw, beyond her astonishing interpretation, a heroine of modern legend, a myth, taken from the penny novelette, but which was nothing else than the metamorphosis of the Cinderella myth transplanted into middle-class society.

This direct analysis, although it was so eloquent, necessarily simplified the character of a person since the language which Griffith was inventing was at that time very poor; but the analysis had to be simple because the masses found as much difficulty in interpreting a concrete picture as in grasping the meaning of a verbal explanation. When the cinema ceases to be simple the public no longer watches; that is no longer builds up into a whole the images displayed talking among themselves, just as at a concert the listener who does not understand or like the music no longer hears anything but sounds. From this analysis or in other words, from the grasping by means of the eye what man reveals most clearly to be understood, if not to deceive, that is his face. We have progressed to the penetration of man's head with the camera as profoundly and with as great precision as the dramatist and the novelist. For in the meantime, although the public only slowly became familiar with its syntax, the language of the cinema was developing and frequent technical advances were making the film into a kind of synthesis of the arts.

Film was bringing to life or extending the art of painting, absorbing the drama, travelling swiftly into space and time, confronting man with impressions never hitherto received; and if there are some who are of the opinion that direct vision, made clearer and more sharply defined by the artist's selection, composition and style, is not so illuminating as a speech, we on the other hand, firmly believe that it frequently has greater impact and is more comprehensive.

A demonstration of the eloquence of the image could be made by drawing support from Christian iconography, symbolic and descriptive; still better would it be to outline the development of a new Christian art of the cinema. Meanwhile, it would be as ill-considered to reduce the seeing of a film to a simple sensory act as to condemn literature under the pretext that verbosity decreases the value of words; just as deceptive to deny the cinema its noble power under the pretext that every year a wave of poor-quality films breaks over us, as, in the same way, there has multiplied since Gutenberg, a literature of low standard.

Let it not be forgotten, or let it be realised that the cinema sometimes needs nothing more than a minute's sequence of talking pictures skilfully composed and directed, to call the attention of the spectator to the very heart of a situation which would require long pages of explanation and comparison on the part of the playwright, the novelist or the reporter. The cinema illumines them all — drama, novel, report — with its own poetry, which is a kind of music and not the mere photographic charm which has always been granted to it by the lazy-minded.

I cannot use the word music without taking the opportunity to add that it is as necessary to know the cinema as it is to know music in order to be able to take in a film in the fullest sense. For the rest there are films which are always a source of pleasure to see and see again because there is always more to be sought and discovered in them — to such an extent is it true that a screen masterpiece draws attention to even more details than it displays.

Elizabeth Bowen, the English novelist, was recently asked if the detective story had influenced the novel. Her reply was, "Is the novel fundamentally anything but an inquest on the human mystery?" What contemporary writer, apart from Proust in his immense work, or Joyce in a tome of 732 pages, has achieved an inquest on a "monster" of modern society such as Orson Welles did in Citizen Kane?

Art of the masses, collective art, does the abuse of these formulae prevent the film from ever having any strength and character except when it is the fruit of one creator, a dominant author director who, still further, can be his own actor, such as in earlier days Chaplin, Sjoström, Stroheim and, today, Welles? Has not the screen this year revealed two very different humorists, but both expressing themselves as freely with the camera as a Daumier with his pencil or a Wilde with his pen: Renato Castellani, author-director of a comedy in which the varied style has become the rich stuff of comedy: E' Primavera; *and Robert Hamer, co-author-director of a satire so intelligent that it is never vulgar and so light that one might believe one was following the conversation of the most brilliant British conversationalist of today:* Kind Hearts and Coronets ?

Seeing these two works, again and again, confirms once more that the quality of their authors is the gift to grasp characters and reveal their soul.

For a long time, the film author has not enjoyed the same freedom of expression as the novelist, who may have recourse to all kinds of techniques; narrative, direct or indirect, dialogue, letters, reminiscence, commentary and so on, in order to move about in space and time and give himself up to introspection or the profound study of various characters. This is because the film author, weighed down by the fallacies of the silent cinema, purist to excess, paralysed by producers living in terror of a public slow to admit artistic progress, has often lacked the imagination and bold freedom to make use of the most marvellous means of expression yet invented by man.

What has stopped the film author is that he often does not feel himself strong enough to impose his own view clearly on the public from whom he must not demand any effort which naturally weighs him down. The public prefers to see only the surface of things rather than be made giddy.

The difficulty is not to discourage or frighten the spectator who is accustomed to following an easy path, a game in which he understands the rules, allowing for surprises. To be persuaded to adventure on an unknown path, the film-goer demands warnings, indications and help.

And so an author-producer won a decisive victory by making use of a fairly commonplace detective plot to impose a personal handling which marks an astonishing conquest of the cinema. This was Mark Henninger who in Naked City *revealed such types of fallen angels, whose story he unfolded and commented on as the film proceeded, reminding them at the most tragic moment of their destiny that they were perhaps free to escape from it.*

And so, in reverse, it took long years for Robert Bresson to see the public appreciate his Dames du Bois du Boulogne *because he maintained a position which was too remote and above all inaccessible between the unimaginative film-goer and characters which were too complex. It was only a story borrowed from Diderot, but three women characters were so subtly transmitted by picture, gesture, intention, motive that each spectator if he had been able to interpret the film, could afterwards have written the interminable novel.*

I mentioned that a screen masterpiece draws attention to even more details than it displays. I repeat that the kind of film which suggests nothing else but descriptive images is only ordinary journalism. The eye must be trained *to look at the screen where many other things take place than what is going on in the story. The screen must be looked at with intelligence, a screen on which every shaft of light is at the same time a syllable, a note of music, and a symbol. For, as is said over the door of the Arab cinema, "Entrance is forbidden to the blind."*

Cinemas are full of people who don't know how to see, and a soul is laid bare *and read with the eyes of the soul. Such as it is, the cinema has already laid bare thousands of characters. Apparently poverty-stricken as it is, the cinema is overwhelmed with neglected riches.*

GUIDO GONELLA
Minister of Public Education, Rome.

The essential relationship between film and teaching

Considered as an auxiliary to teaching, the cinema poses one of the most delicate problems of modern education, a proplem which calls for the close collaboration of technicians and members of the cinema industry and the representatives of teaching and scientific thought.

Such a collaboration has a profound significance, and it will eliminate the mistrust of mechanical means with which up to date the majority of teachers have been filled. This mistrust is justifiable to a certain point only, when one realises that mechanical advances do no more than gradually create the practical means called for by the ever more pressing needs of the mind, and that such means are, in consequence, but empty moulds, waiting to receive the molten stream of human thought and sensitivity.

There are, therefore, no grounds for fearing that what is human (and so admirably human as teaching) will become "mechanised" through the use of the machine; rather are there grounds for the hope that it will be man who, in this as in all his spheres of activity, will "humanise" the machine, making use of it for the enrichment and development of his own personality.

Even a superficial glance at the history of the machine is sufficient to bring the realisation that the invention of a technical method does not precede but always follows the manifestation of the mind's imperious demand: the invention of the printing press can, for example, be regarded as the consequence of a popularisation of culture, the need for which had been widely felt, and which ceased to be the prerogative of special groups of people. It is in just this sphere of spreading culture to reach the outer layers of the population, in this work of making accessible to more and more people the intellectual heritage of a nation, that the cinema must find its niche. Its continual development and particularly its ability to penetrate into vast and, one can even say, unlimited domains of the human intellect are phenomena which cannot fail to have a profound significance, reaching beyond the limits of artistic expression to become a language in its own right, the characters of which must necessarily correspond to the very precise exigencies of modern society.

It is often said that the cinema has created a new perceptiveness in modern youth; it would, perhaps, be more accurate to admit that the awareness of the new generation has propelled the cinema towards a definite stage in its development.

What is certain and forms the basis of the question we are discussing is that the school of to-morrow, planned to satisfy the needs of modern society, cannot hold aloof from so vast a phenomenon; rather must it comprehend and make use of this formidable instrument for the furtherance of its educational ends.

It is true to-day that the teaching profession is filled with a clear and categorical resolve to increase to the maximum the help that can be obtained from the cinema by confiding to it far wider tasks than have hitherto appeared consistent with its potentialities. In affirming this resolve, we are simply interpreting the thought expressed by the Italian teaching profession in its replies to the questionnaire on the Reform of Education. If the school is to become an instrument that really corresponds to the needs of modern society, it is, in our opinion, necessary to effect a complete renewal, not so much of the external, organisational side, as of the whole pedagogic conception upon which it is based. The use of visual aids, not only to inform but also to form intelligence and character, will, I feel certain, constitute one of the most characteristic traits of the modern school.

Such a statement should not appear too alarming to the "last ditch" defenders of the high tradition of teaching as conceived by the Greeks and the Latins. Renewal does not entail a burning of all bridges with tradition, but the creation of the conditions needed for the incorporation of this same tradition within the new forms which the endlessly developing mind has created for itself through technical developments; in other words, tradition must continue to be the vital sap, and not dead and cumbersome wood in the path of the advancing generations.

It is an oft repeated commonplace that "the cinema is the expression of a mechanised civilisation", and that it is, therefore, more suited to countries of recent intellectual development — such, for example, as the United States of America — than

to countries like Italy, which have an ancient tradition of humanism. In fact, the history of the breathless recent years shows that this kind of outlook is quite outdated. The universality of the language of the cinema satisfies two characteristic modern needs: the personal need to enlarge one's own mental world beyond the barriers of race and language, and the necessity of finding, in a culture that is becoming more and more "democratic" in the best and most Christian sense of the word, points in common between the various sections of the population. At the same time, this language satisfies, on a more purely intellectual level, a further more subtle and deeper need of the new generations: the need for a culture which shall not be separate from daily activities, and for a greater unity between active and intellectual life. The teaching of the cinema corresponds to just this need.

The purpose of once more stressing the characteristics peculiar to the language of the cinema is to make possible a more exact conception of the possibilities it offers and of the specific functions it can fulfill in the domain of school teaching and in the still wider field of adult education. There is a current of opinion which maintains that, from the theoretical aspect, there is little new to say about the educational possibilities of the filmic medium, and that all potentialities had been fully explored when, without further ado, the usefulness of Visual Aids as offered by the cinema was accepted and the acceptance concretised by the establishment of a Library of Scholastic Films in Italy in 1938.

The truth is that, in this as in all other preoccupations of the mind, a static attitude cannot but be harmful. Our slow rate of advance is due solely to the little progress that we have made in the theoretical study of this question, which pertains essentially to teaching.

Only careful research can reveal the gaps and weaknesses of organisation and technique in the structure designed to spread the use of the educational film in schools. For this reason, we consider that all technical work which bears on the cinema as an educational medium should be accompanied by careful study of the ends of teaching and of the best methods for attaining these ends. The technical organisation and production of educational films will find a sure basis of renewal in such research, if it is undertaken with method, and the result will be a greater correspondence to the needs of the school of to-day, in Italy as elsewhere.

Our firm intention is to make available to schools, with a minimum of delay and in as full a measure as circumstances allow, the powerful medium for moral and educational formation that is the cinema, in the form best adapted to the modern teacher's needs. But if we are to succeed there must be a renewed and reinforced organisation, for never has the need been so pressing.

The educational film, must, in fact, penetrate not only into colleges and universities but also into class-rooms, that it may become a normal means of illustrating and developing the subjects taught. And this functions hould, moreover, be enlarged until it becomes a source of information and social knowledge in the wider field of adult education.

The cinema has other tasks besides those of the educational film proper. It should, within the limits of possibility, cater for the demand for entertainment films specifically adapted to the needs of young people, as opposed to the present day commercial film designed for adult audiences. It should at the same time aim at developing a taste for good films in the young, and has here a unique opportunity of combating the pernicious moral influence of all the films which are produced from purely commercial considerations.

Fresh horizons are opening out to the cinema in the delicate province of the prophylaxy and therapy of character abnormalities, a province to which psychologists and educational experts are at present devoting their best effort.

This brief glance at the vast possibilities open to the cinema in the field of education will have succeeded, perhaps, in giving some small idea of the strenuous efforts that are called for.

We are sure that the schools alone, in spite of all their hard work, will not succeed unless they are aided by the co-operation of the cinema's technical and industrial workers, who must have a real understanding of their needs and difficulties.

This article by M. Gonella, Italy's Minister for Public Education, co-incides with the opening of a discussion in the Review "Bianco e Nero" on the various functions of the educational cinema.

DIEGO FABBRI
MARIO SOLDATI
CESARE ZAVATTINI

WHO IS GOD?
GOD IS A PURE SPIRIT

1. A suburb. Orchards. A terrace with a small rather solid-looking house built of wood and corrugated iron. To the left of the latter, the railway.

A narrow road runs past the house.

Not far off, a woman is hanging out washing.

The house is closed; but the interior can be seen through a small window set two metres from the ground.

The door of the house opens slowly. A strange looking man comes out. On his head he has a disreputable hat; with the oddest gestures he picks up a few tools (a shovel, pail, or fishing tackle) which are leaning against the wall of the house; after casting a look round, he crosses a tiny lawn, takes to the road and shuffles off in his rough boots.

2. The next moment Mario puts his head out of a nearby hedge and watches the man moving further away. He emerges from his hiding place and takes several steps towards the house. He looks cautiously around him and then beckons to someone out of sight.

3. Five or six boys from six to ten years come on the scene and go up to the house. Mario gives Ernesto a leg up.

4. Ernesto gets up and looks into the house through the lattice of the window.

5. Interior of the house: a poorly furnished house, very old, broken articles of every kind, bits of iron and scrap. In the centre of the table is a ship in a bottle.

6. Ernesto breaks the lattice with a stone (or a lump of iron) and tries to climb through: in vain, for the window is too narrow for him.

7. Ernesto jumps down and gets ready to give him (Clement) a leg up, but Clement shows reluctance.

8. Clement looks around slowly, almost frightened.

9. The shot is continued from another angle.

10. With the agility of a monkey Ernesto climbs on to Mario's shoulders. He tries to get in but the opening is too small for him. The scene is funny. They all push him, except Clement.

11. Meanwhile the shadow of someone walking along the road is thrown on to the wall of the house.

12. All turn startled eyes towards the path whence footsteps are heard; the boys remain silent. Suspense.

13. The Postman appears; he approaches slowly, sorting a bundle of letters.

14. The boys are relieved. Meanwhile Ernesto disappears into the house.

15. Ernesto shows his face at the window.

16. The Postman turns round and sees the boys.

17. He sees Clement who has called to him.

18. The Postman sees the boys' candid expressions and realises that a serious matter is at stake.

19. The Postman raises his eyes to the sky and makes a sweeping gesture with his arms.

It is summer. The chirping of cicadas can be heard. During the dialogue it will become less audible and even fade out. It will be heard again during pauses.

(A long pause during which the cicadas are heard).

(Another pause with the chirping of cicadas.)

Mario. Come on !

Ernesto. There it is! It's still there.

Ernesto. I can't get through. Clement will have to. Come on Clement.

Mario. Get up, quick !

Clement. No, I won't go in there.

Mario. Why not ?

Clement (hesitating). I'm afraid.

Gino. Don't be silly !

Mario. What are you afraid of ? There isn't anyone....

Gino. Tell us, then.

Clement. God is watching me.

Mario (looking round him). What ?

Nino. Get a move on. Don't tell silly tales.

Clement. I'm not going in there.

Mario (disgusted). You're even worse than a girl.

Nino. But God is in church. How can he be watching?

Clement. I don't know, but I was told that if I steal He will see me. I was told He sees everything.

Gino. But pinching a bottle isn't stealing. So....

Clement. What is it then ?

Nino. Who told you that ?

Clement. I've heard it lots of times.....

Ernesto. From grown-ups, yes..... They say that on purpose to keep us from doing anything wrong.

Gino. I'd like to know if it's true.....

Ernesto. Push. Go on !

Nino. Ssh! There's someone coming.

(Chirping of cicadas).

Gino (Looking at Clement who has moved away). Why don't you ask the postman? He knows all about other people.

Mario. Ask himself yourself.....

Ernesto. Idiots! Let him go away.

Clement (Who has suddenly made up his mind). Mister Postman !

Postman (sorting the letters). Nothing for you.... I'm sure there's nothing for you.... Roveri, Tribulzi, Cantoni.....

Clement. I'd like you to tell me something. Do you know where God is ?

Postman. What ?

Clement. Where is God ?

Postman. Oh, I see. You're speaking seriously.

Mario. Yes, we really want to know.

Postman. Well, God.... God.... He's up there....

WORLD PANORAMA

SEGRETERIA DI STATO
DI SUA SANTITÀ

from the Vatican
March 3rd 1950

Dear Mr. President,

You are not unaware of the close attention with which the Holy Father follows the work and development of the O.C.I.C. Indeed, quite recently, on the occasion of your General Council Meeting in London, I had the pleasure of emphasising the feelings which the Head of the Church has towards your activities.

To an Organisation such as yours the services of a specially adapted periodical is indispensable and at this moment when the "International Film Review" is entering upon its second year of publication I am able to tell you that the Holy See supports your efforts and sends good wishes for its development. With a beautiful format and extensive documentation, this review aims at supplying, on the international plane, the need which you have recognised for a Catholic point of view expressed with faith and competence on the problems posed by the developments of the modern cinema. Moreover, your editions in three languages enable you to reach a wide public, and one cannot but hope that, while in no way supplanting the national publications, your review is obtaining the circulation that is merited by the cause it serves.

Thus the Holy Father, with His best wishes for your success in this undertaking, prays that abundant heavenly graces may succour your work and sends to you and your colleagues His paternal Apostolic Blessing.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurance of my devoted interest.

J. B. MONTINI

Rev. Jean Bernard
President of the International Catholic Cinema Office, Brussels.

AFRICAN CINEMA

DREAM OR REALITY?

PIERRE ALBIN MARTEL

One evening, when a freshening breeze from the ocean was just beginning to bring a little coolness to a West African coast town, the forecourt of the hostelry where we had dined was suddenly transformed into a scene of steadily increasing and noisy commotion. Stretched across the far end, a screen stood out conspicuously in the fading light. A film show — always given in the open air, except during the tornado season — was being installed. Barely had the noise and bustling died down when, to the accompaniment of music mixed with articulated but incomprehensible sounds, the first pictures were flashed on to the screen. I have forgotten how many cuts we had to endure and, what is more, I left without waiting for the dénouement of the time-scarred and exhausted Far West film, the most touching scenes of which were the signal for tremendous outbursts of laughter.

We witnessed this many-sided performance at Lomé, but we came across several others in various towns along the West African coast, where men — Greeks or Syrians — in command of the middleman's business have discovered this new means of exploiting the Black.

Of course, there already existed a few cinemas, more or less luxuriously installed and less rudimentarily equipped, where more audible and less "weather-beaten" films were shown, but they were open only to the Whites. Not even the educated Black was admitted, except on certain days set aside for the natives.

During the last three years, however, conditions have changed somewhat. New picture-houses have been built. The films shown are less deteriorated and of more recent date; in some cases, the news reels are less than a fortnight old. The Blacks are admitted more

often, for business must be kept on the move, and they naturally are in the majority; but, except in Senegal, they are not allowed to mix with the Whites.

Is this progress? Yes and no. We may ask what the Blacks of West and Equatorial Africa get out of French and American films. Perhaps, it should even be said that these film shows sometimes have deplorable consequences.

* * *

It should first of all be pointed out that, for the time being, films are seen only by an "evoluated" public, the inhabitants of trading centres and, more particularly, of the sea-ports. However small a percentage of the entire population this public may represent, it is quick at judging, interpreting and assimilating the scenes presented to it as "standards" of morality.

The films, totally unadapted to the native mind, were not at all understood at first. The Blacks went to the cinema and there discovered something new and funny in these restless pictures of the White Man. The picture-going habit was gradually coming into existence....

As time went on, the public was able to isolate certain pictures, certain faces and, above all, certain scenes from this unintelligible ensemble. The scenes most easily or most willingly grasped were those which contained an element of surprise and gratitude combined. Battle scenes, fights and murder had a shock effect on the spectators; because it is more customary to take a passive than an active part in such incidents, films of this kind raised as much laughter as the others. Scenes of drunkenness provoked sadness but were an incitement to indulgence. Scenes of western love-making undeniably scandalised an audience. In countries where relations between the sexes are founded on other principles, where gestures are also totally different, our customs approach rather near to what seems contrary to nature, thus causing a feeling of confusion and almost of offence. In a quasi-official way, moreover, the film illustrates what the Blacks may have believed was the normal mode of living among the average colonials.

Incomprehension and an impression of scandal are still only transitory. Whereas Orientals find in the scenes presented to them by Europeans further reasons for their contempt, the Africans are more easily attracted by them and believe that what comes from outside — from "c i v i l i s e d" countries, alas! — with its engines, speed, force, authority, even subvention and dishonesty, is something superior and deserves to be imitated. Hence, the most scandalous films (or those which at first seemed to be) ultimately induce that sense of mimicry in the Black which leads him to adopt the "white man's ways". Along with alcoholism, the result of the massive importation of spirits, with venereal diseases — also imported, with the instability of social structures, the European film can easily become a further factor in the disintegration of all who were colonised in no mean fashion.

What are the solutions to the problem? Viewing the question from the negative and moralising standpoint current among the so-called "paternalists" (but which film traders were little inclined to adopt) the reserving of moving-picture shows exclusively for Europeans was readily envisaged. Consideration is still being given to the setting up of censorship boards; but would the Whites agree to be the half-victims of this measure for the welfare of the Blacks? This censorship would, unfortunately, be activated as much, if not more, by political and racial considerations as by moral precepts. Some time ago, for example, objections were raised regarding the showing of a news reel in which a black boxing champion defeated his white opponent! Incidentally, we overheard a colonial, who wished to be very convincing, remark to an African: "Besides, boxing is an ugly sport!"

As for the Africans, they are scarcely agreeable to the introduction of measures which must inevitably be vexatious in practice: discriminatory measures that would be rather surprising if taken four years after the promulgation of a constitution which conferred rights of citizenship upon them.

* * *

Give Africa an opportunity of seeing the films actually made in that country. Practically every cinema in France has shown us the documentaries made in Morocco, the Far East and in the land of the pygmies. More than that, in fact, for quite recently picture-houses in the mother-country were showing an authentically African film: Les Paysans Noirs *(Black Peasants). There is, however, an important reservation to be made: the exotic nature of these films will prove to be no attraction for an African public. Exoticism, though a fifty per cent truth overseas, is definitely an error in the countries where it is supposed to originate. We must not forget the Algerian reaction to* Pépé le Moko, *a film that was said to have confused Algeria with a few quarters of the Kasbah. From another standpoint, M. Leroy-Gourhan said recently: "The blacks dance well and often, but we have seen so much stamping around to the sound of tom-toms that we long to see them surrounded by a family, or working on the land, while the women-folk are busy in the home." 1) Furthermore, the blacks are tired of being looked upon as strange animals. All we need say is that some excellent films can be made in Africa. Let us also extract the essential feature of* Paysans Noirs, *which, for many spectators, was a revelation: we refer to the acting of the blacks, who spontaneously give expression to every one of their movements.*

When we recall that Africa, formerly so rich in spoken traditions, is now represented in the literary world by some remarkable writers, we may be led to wonder whether, in the field of cinema, such talent could not also be placed at the service of Africa itself.

Whoever has seen the European "duds" shown to African audiences cannot but ask the same questions: it is easy to imagine, instead of the exploitation described above, the influence that could be exerted by films adapted to the needs and mentality of the African peoples. We do not mean the influence of films that would exclude everything foreign to the country and which would be content to remain within the circle of a few folklore themes.... In a word, African films conceived with Africans and interpreted by Africans.

There is a lot of talk these days about popular culture, social welfare campaings, etc., not only in the sphere of non-self-governing territories but also on the national and international planes. Amazingly ambitious programmes are planned on paper but very little is done. In Africa, more than in any other part of the world, the moment is ripe for promoting cultural activities for the benefit of the people. Whereas the cinema, in European countries, has only a complementary value alongside a powerful influence, in Africa it could take on a value and exert an influence of the highest order It is a commonplace to call attention to the small progress that has been made in the matter of education. Colleges open to all (?) are of very recent date; primary education is still far from reaching the entire population: educational films would have the advantage of allowing pupils to see the phenomena explained to them but which they rarely meet with in their daily life. The task is an urgent one and, in one of his recent books, an author declared that the future of the French (Colonial) Union depended essentially on the cultural policy pursued by the mother-country, and concluded with the words: "We should not let the teachers' hour pass." 2)

Teachers — and this term should be interpreted in a very broad sense: all whose mission it is to educate — should not study this problem exclusively from the school point of view. We might almost say that school problems are easy to solve; but action on behalf of the African people in general should not stop at the school

---

1) Honoré Leroy-Gourhan: "Cinéma et Sciences humaines: Le film ethnologique existe-t-il?" Revue de Géographie humaine et d'ethnologie, No 3.

2) Henri Brunschwig: "La Colonisation Française". Paris, 1949.

level. No serious effort has been made to prevent the ever-widening gulf from separating past and present Africa, from separating the Bush (contemptuous references to the bushmen are so common) from the towns, the Africa of the men from the Africa of the women; these disparities have been stressed far too much. Consequently, while action in the schools is extended and made to penetrate more deeply, action aiming at the raising of the people's cultural standard should still be initiated, and one of the most effective media for this action might very well be the cinema.

What is needed, therefore, is the making of films, corresponding to definite groups of territory, some simply of an educational character, others bringing out all that should be maintained in native traditions and expressed for the benefit of the entire population. Films of this kind, with scenarios written in collaboration with Africans and interpreted by native actors, would be highly appreciated by the public. We have, on numerous occasions, realised how delighted they are to see themselves, to recognise themselves as they really are, in a small 8mm. amateur film. If they take exception to the manner in which they are made to appear on the screen, the explanation lies in the fact that these films, conceived as they are in an exotic atmosphere, present only a very fragmentary aspect of their milieu, and in most cases an aspect which, in their opinion, is out-of-date. When, therefore, an African cinema has at last been created, it will be of value only in so far as film producers and directors, setting aside their own mentality, learn how to "think African"; or, better still, when they decide to hand over the reins to African thinkers.

Care must be taken to ensure that these films, shorn of facile exoticism, are not used for the purpose of propaganda, a fault that will be difficult to avoid by directors working for governments and with the help of government funds. To those who are anxious to express the "grandeur of France's achievements overseas", we would say that this grandeur has no chance of asserting itself unless attention is concentrated on achievements in a manner calculated to penetrate into the mind.

There are already a number of persons drawing up plans for whom film-making comes well within their field of interest, They have shown that their sense of proportion is seriously deficient: they proposed transporting to Africa a complete studio equipment from France, with an army of assistants. If, in these conditions, they might produce one or two good films, they would, after all, have taken part in an exceptional cinema undertaking. Technique has its specific requirements and when embarking on serious work one must be wary of amateurism; nonetheless, the fact remains that pioneers have to attempt a great deal with small means. They must rely only on themselves.

At the risk of coming into conflict with a number of disinterested research workers, we would add that the making of ethnological films is another danger to be guarded against. Ethnology, essentially and par excellence a science of Man, can also be inhuman, and our thoughts once more turn to the Africans. The films must, above all, be human, capable of satisfying present aspirations, not films which convey to those concerned the impression that all we retain of them is what can be seen in a museum. To quote M. Leroy-Gourhan once again, we agree that: "A good Chinese, Hindoo, Arab or African film, conceived and made by men of the country, constitutes a document of totally different ethnological value."

To sum up, the African films we have in mind must be inspired by such men as Tempels and Griaule 3); they must faithfully express the fundamental dynamism of the Black World — an internal dynamism that permeates its ontology, but also a new dynamism which to-day impels it towards the modern world.

---

3) R. P. Placide Tempels: "La Philosophie Bantoue." Marcel Griaule: "Dieu d'eau", and other works.

CAMEO-CINEMA

IN ALGERIA

P. MURATI

Head of the film distribution centre in Algeria

Until 1943, the year in which the *Service de Diffusion Cinématographique de l'Algérie* came into being, the cinema had played but an insignificant role amongst the Algerian Moslem population. Before this date no attempt had been made to set up in Algeria any kind of film organisation capable of meeting the need for up to date information.

First Attempts.

In September, 1943, a motor van was allocated to the Director of Moslem Affairs. This vehicle, fitted with a light generator, an amplifier, a record player and a loudspeaker, was given the mission of travelling throughout Algeria, visiting the villages of the interior and the scattered rural districts.

Later it was fitted with 16 mm. projection apparatus and documentary and factual films, and gave projections in the open or in halls, as well as conveying announcements of public interest to the *souks* and the villages, and broadcasting records of the folk music of the districts visited.

The experience gained during a series of tours during 1943, 1944 and 1945 made possible a choice of the best methods. The documentary films made by the *Service Cinématographique de l'Armée* (Army Film Service) enjoyed great popularity, as did also the broadcast records, the illustrated leaflets, printed in Arabic, that were distributed, and the exhibitions of documentary photographs which were done with the help of portable panels.

The Materiel.

"The rural cinema having proved to be an incomparable means of expression" and an instrument of education, the Algerian Government acquired, in February, 1946, a first mobile projection van.

This was the real beginning of the *Service de Diffusion Cinématographique de l'Algérie*. At the moment of writing this service has at its disposal· two mobile vans especially fitted for 35 mm. projection; one motor coach for 16 mm. projection, with apparatus for making and playing records and announcements; two jeeps; a generator; a third projection van will shortly be available.

Of French construction, all this apparatus is well adapted for the ceaseless and often difficult work which it has to do.

In this way, between June, 1946, and March, 1949, the two vans and the coach had travelled a distance of 45.000 kms. in the three Algerian departments and the Sahara territories and had given 786 sessions to audiences totalling over a million people.

Technical Organisation.

The team in charge of a cinema van consists of: — a leader, responsible for the itinerary, the organisation of sessions, etc., a projectionist, a driver electrician, and a speaker.

The speaker's task is either to talk about the films in Arabic before projection, or to commentate during projection. Films with a commentary in dialectical Arabic are still rare.

The films are provided by the S. D. C., local distributors and the Army Film Service.

The Tours.

When a tour is decided upon, the S. D. C. informs the Prefects concerned and they in their turn, through the intermediary of the sub-Prefects, advise the Mayors and other authorities. Local authorities are warned in advance of the arrival of the van so that they may make all necessary arrangements. Usually the date coincides with the local weekly market day. Radio Algiers also gives details of the van's itinerary in its Moslem broadcasts.

After a call on the mayor or administrator, a reconnaissance is made and a suitable site selected. The time of the session is given out over the loud speaker. Records, too, are broadcast, posters exhibited and brochures and leaflets distributed to the people.

At nightfall, when everything is ready, the audience arrives and establishes itself between the van and the screen, beneath the projector's beam. Recorded music or song is broadcast over the loudspeaker, varied with comic sketches, the most popular of which are those made by Rachild K s e n t i n i, known as the "Algerian Molière". Some of the onlookers bring chairs or borrow benches from the neighbouring Moorish cafés. The local authority presides at these shows, which are, of course, free. A little apart, at the sides of the van, Moslam women often form part of the audience.

The leader gives a short talk in French before the session begins, with the aim of putting the audience *au courant* and explaining the major points of the film. The speaker then translates into dialectical Arabic. Then the show begins, and goes on for about two hours. Afterwards the mayor or the *Caid* of the *douar* say a few words into the microphone thanking the Government for having sent the unit and the audience for having attended in such numbers.

These tours have taken place mainly amongst the Moslem and European populations of the departments of Algeria, Orania and Constantine, and around certain zones of the Sahara territories (Zibans, Ain-Sefra, Colomb-Béchard....).

The Algerian holiday camps have also been visited, and so have permanent educational centres and numerous scholastic establishments.

In the course of certain tours, notably in the Southern Territories and in the seaside and mountain holiday camps, shots are taken on a 16 mm. camera by S. D. C. operators, with the aim of building up material for montage for the use of the service's portable projectors.

Many of the recordings brought back by these teams have been used as the sound track of films.

The acquisition of the generator group, which makes it possible to show films in areas which have no electricity, has extended the range of the cinema into far-off *douars* and into holiday camps situated, such as that at Tessala (Orania).

Programmes.

Experience has proved the value of carefully built-up programmes, divided into several parts, with a definite place for documentary, educational, entertainment and French propaganda films.

Documentaries about North-African life, which are shown first, are usually very popular, as they show the audience familiar places and people and are the expression of facts and actions which they all know. They are greeted with a general murmur of pleasure and enthusiasm.

Animated cartoons, so long as they are simple, provoke great merriment, especially the "Adventures of Mathurin", whom the speaker compares to the celebrated "Djeha".

Educational films (agriculture, craftsmanship, industry..) and propaganda films are equally well received, for the spectator, having first been shown moving pictures which are to him the materialisation of what he sees in his daily life, has been given confidence and never questions the veracity of what he is shown.

The choice of records for broadcasting has also a psychological importance which must not be ignored.

The S. D. C. has an expanding film-library from which the programmes are made up. The library is composed of various categories of film: documentaries about Algeria — informational films (pilgrimage to the Holy Places of Islam....) — films on hygiene — factual films about France and other countries — other documentaries (Paris Métropolitain) — practical and theoretical instructional films — films with sound commentary in Arabic.

Programmes are completed with films which the S. D. C. obtain from the Algerian distributors. In this way it has been possible to show animated cartoons and Arabic versions of the major films made by the French firms in North Africa and France, such as "LA SEPTIEME PORTE", "LE FILS DU CHERIF"....: also good commercial films, as "LA BELLE ET LA BETE", "ADEMAI BANDIT D'HONNEUR", "ASSURANCE SUR LA MORT".

The Army Film Service, also, has lent films of great interest, which are always well received by Algerian audiences.

This organisation appears to produce the best possible results. Alive and supple, adaptable to people and localities, free from all political influence, positive and direct in approach, it has a real educational power, and can make the spirit of France shine forth to the Moslem masses.

No better proof is needed than the numerous demands for similar vans and apparatus which emanate from the lands of the French Union, and also from foreign countries such as Switzerland, and Iran. Certain French *départements*, cinema technicians, industrial concerns or scientific organisations have also asked the S. D. C. for a comprehensive documentation on the running of this service.

An unshakeable faith inspires the teams who work the service; they have no doubt of the prime role which "good" cinema can and must play in the moral, social and cultural evolution of the human race, and in its way of thought.

The S. D. C.'s alloted task is to educate, to teach and to inform. For such a mission it must know how to maintain a wise balance between psychological problems and technical matters.

It must know how to show the true character of France to Algeria without empty declamation and in no spirit of tendentiousness.

ARAB CINEMA

MAURICE ROBERT BATAILLE

It was in 1946 that Arabic films made their first appearance in French North Africa, not films that adopt for their setting the territories of Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia, but Arabian talking films created specially for the Mahometan peoples.

Between 1946 and 1948, half-a-dozen of these films were produced: Fils du Destin, Sérénade à Meryem, La Septième Porte, Marouf, Savetier du Caire, Kenzi et Yasmina *— some of these in two versions — were presented in North Africa.*

These films, however, with the exception of Noces de Sable, *which has not yet reached Algeria, scored but a relative success.*

Such a result seems, at first sight, rather surprising, for the Mahometan public show the warmest enthusiasm for Arabian films and the reels brought in from Cairo are always very well received from Tunis to Marrakech.

The reasons for this to Moroccan production can be undoubtedly traced various errors in conception. First of all, the scenarios to which the Moroccan companies devoted their attention were of too intellectual a character for Mahometan spectators, or else they presented such a complication of episodes that they were incomprehensible and could therefore be neither appreciated nor profitable to the mind.

To take an example, the plot of La Septième Porte, *for which Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost were responsible, was built around the idea Destiny, in symbolised in the form of a magnificent white autocar. This hyper-symbolical treatment of the subject puzzled a public accustomed to a more simple view of the world. Unable to take part in action beyond his powers of comprehension, the Mahometan spectator remained unsatisfied.*

In the same way, the spasmodic and involved situations in Fils du Destin *and* Sérénade à Meryem *wearied merchants, artisans, public employees and adolescents, that is to say practically the entire Mahometan public.*

On the other hand, Marouf, Savetier du Caire, *which faithfully followed the famous tale of* Arabian Nights, *and* Kenzi, *a bright, alert and simply devised comedy, were more favourably received.*

Still more than inadequate scenarios, however, it is the mediocrity of their direction that paralyses the dissemination of films made in Morocco, particularly their settings, for, from the technical standpoint, though still of rather low standard. — La Septième Porte *and* Noces de Sable *excepted — these films are still more acceptable than those produced in Egypt.*

Since 1927, in fact, Egypt has been placing before Mahometan spectators theatrical and badly constructed historical "reconstitutions" offering nothing but musical interest, or more modern reels with their scanty attire and cabaret scenes in imitation of the more detestable American productions.

In 1948, a Mahometan journalist from Tlemcen wrote the following comment on Egyptian films imported into North Africa: "The themes presented to the public have, so far, been of relative value only. Drawn from present-day life, their scenario amounts to little more than sentimental melodrama or a barely adapted version of an underworld drama. When a scenario writer turns his attention to legends, and other fairy tales, epic poems and the like, he chooses subjects which are either time-worn or disconcertingly artless, or frightfully immoral.

Yet Nile Valley film-makers have a surprising success in distributing their films in all the Arabic-speaking countries, the reason being that they take advantage, when making them, of native songs and dances which are to the taste of the Mohammedan population as well as their liking for certain popular film stars.

Morocco is not, however, in a position to compete with Egypt; it has as yet no actors of very great repute. There is Mahieddine, *of course, but* Habid Reda, Touri *or* Nacira Chafik *are but littleknown stars compared with the Egyptians* Abd el Whahab, Farid el Attrach, Anwar Whabgy, Oum Kaltsoum, Kouka Tahia Carioca *or* Youssef Whaby *whose names are on the lips of every Mahometan.*

Now, in Africa, as in all other parts of the world, spectators are drawn more by a star than by the film itself. From the very outset, Egypt showed great cleverness in engaging prominent singers in order to attract the widest public to the cinema.

Furthermore, the music and dances seen in the films produced in Morocco are far inferior to those presented by the Misr *studios. In Algiers, for example, a poorly paid worker will go to see* Jours heureux *five or six times, merely to hear the greatest Arab singer* Abd el Whahab, *but he will not go a second time to see* Marouf, *a Fez production, because the musical part of this film is, in his opinion, of poor quality.*

Such a handicap is extremely serious for Arabian films made in Morocco and all the more difficult to overcome since Egyptian production amounts to 50 films a year as compared with 5 or 6 in Cherifian Empire.

It may therefore be asked what is to be done in Morocco in the face of such circumstances.

First of all, for whom should films be produced and hence what subjects should be chosen?

The problem is all the more difficult to solve owing to the fact that there are three distinct Mahometan publics in North Africa.

The first public, which constitutes a minority, consists of educated Arabs and Kabyles: teachers, doctors, lawyers, citizens and the progressive peasantry; the second category includes elements in process of evolution: the rising generation, the working class, shopkeepers, craftsmen and civil service personnel; the third, still only a potential factor, is made up of the uneducated and illiterate community to whom the cinema is unknown.

As these three classes of public differ very widely one from the other, it would seem that the thing to do, under present conditions, is to provide each of them with their own type of cinema.

For the educated class of spectators, however, Arabian films are not a prime necessity. Nothing differentiates an educated Mahometan from an educated European; consequently, films of any nationality will be appreciated equally by both, provided that the films are good.

On the other hand, the Mahometans in process of development need Arabian films in keeping with their mental outlook. But what subjects are we to choose for them?

Contrary to what certain producers in Morocco are doing, and for the reasons set forth above, there can be no question of imitating Egypt, which is already imitating Hollywood.

It would be equally futile to try to copy the great American films in technicolor, such as Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves *or* Alladin and the Magic Lamp *or* Sinbad the Sailor, *all of which are technically stupendous but the only oriental feature they possess is their title.*

The solution must therefore be sought in a totally different direction.

It is obviously impossible to envisage Arabic-talking films produced exclusively for the benefit of the Mahometans of French North Africa. From the artistic point of view, such a limited conception would not only be a mistake, but financially it would end in disaster since the market available to the three Arab territories would not cover the cost of producing a feature-length film.

---

1) *The English films:* Caravan, The Thief of Bagdad *and the American film* Sinbad the Sailor, *have on the other hand, been dubbed in Arabic. — In 1949, the 8.000 Egyptian actors and technicians went on strike in protest against the American intention of dubbing, in Arabic, several of the films produced in the United States.*

2) Kenzi, *filmed in Morocco, was bought by Alexander Korda for distribution in Pakistan.*

To avoid these pitfalls, it will therefore by necessary to produce films which, like the Egyptian films, can be distributed in all the countries where Mahometans are to be found.

In other words, one must go from North Africa to all the Islamic countries, from the particular to the general, or to quote Eluard: "from the horizon of one man to the horizon of all". The best way to achieve this is to reduce universal subjects to individual dimensions.

Arab cinema in French North Africa should therefore concentrate on thinking in the Arab spirit and not on copying the West as the Egyptians are doing. Its scenarios and its music must be specifically Arab.

Now, the most momentous problems in Morocco, in Algeria or in Tunisia, are of the human order. If films producers attempted to make films whose subjects set aside the picturesque and dealt with realities, such works would have a tremendous circulation.

It would not be a matter of politics but a proof of intelligence to choose scenarios dealing with the desire for culture, racial questions, the fight against starvation, illness or the elements, the evolution of a family, youth, the emancipation of women or the synthesis of Eastern and Western civilisations.

To do this requires courage, clear thinking and a censorship familiar with the evolution of peoples.

In their film Man of Two Worlds *(to which the less explicit title* Le Sorcier Noir *was given in the French version), the English sincerely expressed the happiness and sorrow of a negro who, after studying in England, returns to his native Tanganyika to save his brothers from moral darkness and superstitious belief. Such a subject does more to raise human beings to higher planes and to make them realise the significance of their existence than all the picturesque and negative descriptions, which do but lead to apathy.*

I do not wish to cite Man of Two Worlds *as a perfect example of what should be attempted, for, in my opinion, this film is difficult to follow for men who are not absolutely masters of their intellectual capacity, but its theme is of considerable value.*

It is easy to appreciate the human interest and the social significance of a film portraying the life of a young Mahometan who, born amidst the poverty of his people, succeeds by sheer work, in educating himself and in rising to a position of manly dignity.

One can quite well imagine a plausible story with the above idea as a starting-point, and moreover of topical interest.

To construct scenarios of this kind, it is necessary to approach men familiar with North Africa. North-African writers of French, Arab or Kabyle origin have a great part to play in this matter. François Bonjean *has already written the commentary for several shorts in Morocco.* El Boudali Safir, *in Algiers, has furnished the scenario for a documentary, while* Professor Marçais *has acted as adviser to* Georges Regnier *for his film* Islam. *The time has come to see things on a bigger scale, to go farther than the documentary and* ask Camus, El Boudali Safir, Robles, Mohamed Dib, Amrouche, Audisio, Ahmed Sefrioui, Freminville *and other less known writers to give a picture of the land of their birth and the streets in which they have lived.* 3)

The language question is just as important as that of scenarios. The dialogue of the first Egyptian films was written in literary Arabic, with the result that only a few spectators understood. The Nile Valley producers have since adopted a form of Arabic midway between Egyptian dialect and literary Arabic, a tongue that is understood throughout the Middle East and in French North Africa.

In Morocco, however, no authors speak this so-called intermediate Arabic; consequently, the script of La Septième Porte, *the first Moroccan film, was written in literary Arabic, which the majority of the public were totally unable to understand. It might even be said that, very often, the French captions helped the Algerian Mahometans to follow a plot that was incomprehensible to them spoken in classic Arabic.*

A multiplicity of problems arise also in connexion with music. Since the highly-westernised Egyptian music at present prevails in North Africa, the film producers of French North Africa, instead of imitating it, should endeavour to revive that Arab music akin to that of Andalusia and try to instil new life into old themes of extraordinary beauty.

Lastly, in the technical field various difficulties have to be faced. Not only must the French North-African territories be equipped with studios and laboratories, film technicans must also be trained.

Since a technician cannot be improvised but needs to serve a term of hard training with a film director, it is to be hoped that producers from the home-country working in Morocco, Algeria or Tunisia will engage Mahometan assistants who will thus have an opportunity of learning their profession and very soon be able to start on the production of documentaries, followed by long films.

We should also like to see IDHEC admit Mahometan students who could train as producers in this specialised institute.

No other course is open to North African cinema. Not until subjects are frankly and boldly approached, when film producers and directors "mix with the crowd" and discover real men and not merely puppets, will it be possible to create a stable and flourishing seventh art in North Africa.

All that is needed is pluck and determination.

---

3) *In May 1949,* Camus, Audisio, Amrouche, Celly and Pierre Blanchar *adressed a circular letter along these lines to Algerian intellectuals.*

REPORT OF THE UNESCO COMMISSION FOR TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS: PRESS-FILMS-RADIO, 1949

	Cinemas	Spectators by millions per annum	Studios	Studio-decks	Laboratories	Feature films produced in 1948	Seats
ALGERIA	230 *	20 30% moslems	—	—	—	—	130 000
EGYPT	225 **	38	8 a)	15	6	40-45	200 000
MOROCCO	100 ***	12,5	1 b)	1	1 f)	6	65 000
TUNISIA	60 ****	8,5	1 c)	1	1	—	28 000
LEBANON	48	6	—	—	—	—	24 000
TURKEY	275	25	7 e)	—	3	15	175 000

* *including 30 in 16mm.*
** *including 60 to 70 open-air.*
*** *including 9 in 16mm. and 1 travelling in 35mm.*
**** *including 8 in 16mm. and 2 travelling in 35mm.*

2) *All in Cairo, plus 1 in Alexandria (in course of construction).*
b) *SOUISSI studios at Rabat.*
c) *AFRICA Studios.*
e) *6 at Istanbul and 1 at Adana.*
f) *1946: 4 Arabic and 2 in French.*
1947: 2 Arabic and 2 in French.
3 Arabic, 2 in French and 1 in English.

EGYPT

FILM ACTIVITIES DURING RECENT MONTHS

Egypt has seen a film "migration" this winter; so much so that Cairo has been referred to as the "Egyptian Hollywood". True, the climate is delicious and the relics of the Pharoahs have a universal appeal, even for professional artists. A large number of American and Italian business men have made highly successful tours. Many Italian film artists have come, to add to the number of their fans by being present in person at the première of their films, and especially to work on Italo-Egyptian co-productions. For the country has turned resolutely to co-production. *L'Epervier du Nil* was made in the Misr Studios, and *Les Interieurs* in Italy. *Carrefour Impérial* will be made mostly in Egypt, with the help of the Nahas Studios. Orson Welles has booked the Misr Studios for film-making. Mac Donald has just finished *Poison Road*, starring Eric Portman, who came out with a number of English actors.

After several unfortunate and half-hearted efforts, the French film has secured an entry. Whether it will be able to remain is another question.

A contract between La Société Orientale du Cinéma (Orient-Film Society) and Productions Cinématographiques Françaises (French Film Productions) has been signed, and for the occasion we had the pleasure of the presence of M. Gérin, the delegate of the French Producers' Syndicate.

It must be admitted that the hopes raised have not yet been fulfilled.

There are, for instance, cinemas in Alexandria and Cairo which show only European films: French and Italian, and the latter are the more popular. The three firms which import Italian films are bringing in sixty films this year.

English and American productions remain supreme. The success of *Joan of Arc* surpassed imagination. Popular reaction was unparalleled. In Cairo more than in Alexandria the Moslems themselves formed an impassioned audience. The following incident illustrates the quasi-religious fervour which the film aroused: in Cairo, when the film was nearly ended, at the stake scene to be precise, a group of Moslem students threw themselves to their knees. On another occasion a young Arab rose to his feet during the interval to cry out that this was the kind of foreign film Egypt should import. And we very nearly didn't see this film in Egypt.....

The Third Man was not properly appreciated. The need to educate public taste is more clearly apparent than ever before.

R. P. Franzidis.

CENSORSHIP

Egyptian Censorship may not enjoy an international reputation. It has accorded us every courtesy and consideration. For instance, the entry permit of two Italian films was recently held up pending the favourable report of the local Catholic clergy. The films in question, *La Storia di una Capinera* and *La Monaca di Monza*, deal with doubtful religious vocations and the Minister of the Interior was anxious to avoid offending Catholic sensibilities. The distributors invited us to see and report on these films, and a Censorship certificate was given only after we had attested that they were not in themselves hurtful to Catholics.

Not bad for a country which has a Moslem majority.

ACTIVITIES OF THE C. C. E. C.

The Centrale Catholique Egyptienne du Cinéma (Egyptian Catholic Film Centre) produces, thanks to a team of four people, regular moral classifications of all Egyptian productions. These technical and moral criticisms, published in French and Arabic, are available to all who want them in North Africa, the Middle East, France, the Indies and China.

The O. C. I. C. "Appeal to the Cinema Industry" has been translated into Arabic and sent to all the members of the Egyptian film world, a total of about seventy people. The text has been printed in the more important film reviews, J. Pascal's "Ciné-Film", No. 20, Jan. 1st 1950, and "Studio" (an Arabic review).

After three months' work, a 16 mm. circuit, based on Christian schools and parishes, has at last been organised. The purpose of this organisation "Centre d'Etudes Cinématographiques", (Film Study Centre) is threefold: to use the cinema as a means of instruction and education; to inculcate a sense of film appreciation in school children; and to meet the demand for films for young people.

Egypt's three Latin Bishops have given us their full support and are our patrons. A good half of the schools has failed to appreciate the importance of this work. Four of them are definitely against any use of film; the remainder, about twenty-five in number, are members of the C. C. E. C.

The circuit began to function last month. Three schools have their own Ciné-clubs. The future is hopeful.

Our means do not permit the publication of a review, the need for which, moreover, is not apparent. We have preferred to work on the lines of publishing regular articles on films of real value. The two foremost national newspapers gladly give space to our criticisms, the more so as there are no independent film critics writing for the dailies. The distributors have welcomed this venture, and give us special screenings of any films we want to see.

ETHIOPIA

AMERICAN STUDIOS AT ADDIS-ABABA

Ethiopia has just signed an important agreement with an American group for the equipment and organisation of a cinematographic centre at Addis-Ababa.

The Americans have undertaken to construct two studio decks, an auditorium, a laboratory and a small film-printing shop. They are to supply three film cameras, a truck with sound-recording outfit and an initial staff of assistants who will remain at the studios for a period of five years.

There is only one restrictive clause in the contract: Ethiopia agrees not to produce *Far West* films, those eminently popular American productions, with chases on horseback, inexhaustible guns and innumerable herds of cattle.

The American-Abyssinian project is made specially interesting on account of the geographical and ethnic peculiarities of Ethiopia. This country happily summarises the whole of Africa in the types of the natives that inhabit its provinces, in their language and in their religions. It

is common knowledge that although Ethiopia was one of the first Christian nations on the world, it comprises Mahometan regions professing different creeds. This independent empire dating back over a thousand years could very well serve as the centre for African cinema and its attendant problems. The dazzling light on the lofty Abyssinian plateaux will also contribute to the success of this ambitious and far-sighted film-producing scheme.

TANGIER

Spain and Great Britain are contemplating the building, in Tangier, of a film-production centre whose activities can be made to radiate throughout the Arabic-speaking territories. Though the greater part of the capital invested is Spanish, the future studios will work under the direction of English technicians.

PANORAMA OF THE CINEMA IN URUGUAY

Uruguay is no exception to the general rule that the cinema is one of the principal amusements of the public: everyone goes to the cinema at least once a week. The greatest manifestation of this is in Montevideo, the capital, a city which is very heavily populated in comparison with the rest of the country since it contains a third of the total population. This, of course, has its effect on the social aspect of the cinema.

News of Montevideo's activity in the field of the cinema scarcely reaches the interior of the country. Two organisations which are devoted to the spreading of worthwhile films "Cine Arte" and "Cine Club", of which we will speak below, are completely unknown outside Montevideo, a fact which inevitably affects adversely the judgment of the mass of the public whose only impression of the cinema is a purely commercial one.

One should perhaps consider first of all the national industry. But it must be appreciated that its concrete results are still few and far between and it is probable that its noteworthy productions have not yet reached double figures, and are in any case of no great value.

But the real characteristic of our film panorama is the introduction of foreign films which are invading our cinemas.

There are very few countries in the world which allow similar liberty of entry to foreign productions, a fact which allows our public not only to choose a film which is to its taste but also to watch the fierce struggle to dominate the market. However, poor advantage of this liberty is taken by cinema "fans." Our public, which has not even the slightest film culture and is attracted solely by the presence of a star, remains indifferent to the artistic, social or cultural message which a film might have for it. Thus, the director and the scenarist are pushed into the background with a corresponding inversion of values. This misleads the public as much as does the commercial battle which is carried on with the usual tricks of publicity: pretty girls, handsome heroes, amazing adventures, cheap laughs and flat lying.

Entangled amidst the superabundance of films, the toils of unscrupulous publicity and the whole commercial auction, the spectator has defended and maintained his feeble authority by letting his preferences to some extent be obvious.

These are mainly directed towards the American cinema, since the spectator is still affected by the memory of films made from 1930 to 1940 portraying people, and does not notice its artistic decadence both of form and of matter.

The objective proof of this supremacy is based on a number of films which come every year from the Californian studios.

The French cinema has its supporters too, thanks chiefly to the psychological affinity of a nation of Latin origin. Those elements which are indispensable to film work resume their importance in the French cinema: wealth of subject, the exactness of expression of its great directors, the superlative realistic style upon which it has always insisted.

The real revelation of today is the new Italian cinema. Its poverty of material means has not hindered it from achieving success in the field of the "Neo-Realist" school which is considered here to be a new line of development in the art of the cinema. The Italian cinema is proving that money alone is incapable of inspiring that art, which can only be the fruit of a creative talent.

The English cinema — like the French — has suffered an alarming diminution of the number of its films shown in Uruguay. More, the English cinema, which shows no definite trend, is but coldly received, but the special distinction of its restraint, the excellence of its actors and its artistic development place it among the foremost of the producer countries, thanks especially to its most recent productions. We should notice here the reception given to *Hamlet*, which, although it succeeded in attracting the mass of the public, was not really understood and appreciated at its true value.

The Soviet cinema, originally conceived as an effective means of propaganda and well served by the talent of its directors, has kept its political character which limits its appeal to a restricted public.

The cinema of the Spanish-speaking world falls into two main groups: the Argentine cinema, in spite of a certain perfection of form is paralysed by an obvious lack of subjects, of competent actors and of experienced cineasts, but the ostentatious bad taste and melodramatic tone of some of its productions ensure its success with the masses; the Mexicans, for their part, are no more distinguished as to the banality or stupidity of their scenarios. The Fernandez-Figueroa team, which has produced real works of art, is absolutely foreign to the Mexican cinema and would have succeeded in any country.

These notes are concerned only with the principal tendencies of our market. Other countries, particularly European ones, are making their contribution to the development of the Seventh Art, but their influence is too faint to be noticed by the time it reaches our shores.

It is the public which makes its choice for itself. Intelligent criticism is almost non-existent.

It is difficult to find a free critic in our country, since the press has not complete economic independence and cinema advertisements form one of its chief sources of revenue. A film company will never support a paper which does not praise its films. So film criticism is lacking in a country

where theatre and musical criticism are highly developed, even though neither the theatre nor the concert-hall have the popularity of the cinema in Uruguay.

The few publications which venture on to this dangerous ground fall into three clearly defined categories. One of these, which is directed towards constructive criticism, though it appears but rarely, seeks to lay down principles through a simple, unvarying and honest standard of selection. The second shows a virulent or destructive tendency, since it has no other principle but its own materialistic aim, and systematically denigrates accepted standards while taking good care not to suggest any new lines of approach. And, finally, there is neutral criticism which is limited to reporting in more or less literary form, the programmes of the week, without drawing the conclusions which every film must suggest. Of all these categories, the one in greatest favour is the second.

Let us end this outline by noticing the activity of two organisations which are fostering our film culture. The first, chronologically speaking, is officially under the auspices of the Ministry of Education through the official radio service, (S. O. D. R. E.), an institution which is devoted to popularising art in its highest forms. "Cine Arte" which was set up six years ago, is, by reason of its official character, in permanent contact with leading film organisations throughout the world, and, consequently, is in a position to put on, from time to time, film shows whose value is undisputed.

"Cine Club", on the other hand, is due entirely to the efforts of a group of young students who wished to encourage good taste in the cinema by showing to club members, and indeed to the general public, films which have become classics. At present it organises private shows of short films in 8 or 16 mm., public shows of long films in 35 mm, debates, amateur film competitions, and it edits a specialised review. Although it has been only two years in existence, it is becoming more and more successful.

J. C. Ponce de Léon and Carlos Rauschert Chiarino.

A NATIONAL FILM INDUSTRY ?

Our little state of Uruguay has earned distinction in the field of intellectual activity and occupies a privileged position in the concert of South American nations, but where film production is concerned it continues to remain in the rear. Although we have all the requisite intellectual and human means for the development of this industry, whenever somebody has come forward with a plan for the organisation of film production, his efforts have met with failure. On several occasions, attempts have been made to secure the collaboration of private financiers for the founding of film undertakings, but for one reason or another, these capital outlays have been diverted into other channels, leaving the film industry totally devoid of economic facilities.

This state of affairs has led the Public Authorities to step in, in the place of private initiative, and to take the measures necessary for the development of a national cinema industry.

In May 1948, the Executive Council set up a commission to examine the problem in all its aspects and to prepare a preliminary project for the creation of a National Film Industry. This commission very rapidly produced this preliminary project and, after consideration by the Council of Ministers, the plan, with a few minor amendments, was laid before Parliament. The project provides for the founding of a National Cinematograph Institute, whose function it will be to ensure the production of films while encouraging and supporting private initiative.

The Institute is to build studios equipped with up-to-date apparatus where it will be able to turn out its own films, part of the premises being reserved for private cinema concerns.

The Institute will supervise film-making from the technical and artistic standpoints. Not a word is said, however, about the moral aspect of the question; this is to be studied, in accordance with religious principles, by parliamentary cultural committees and similarly qualified private institutions, for a question of such essentiel importance cannot, of course, be set aside.

The same project also provides for the protection of national production by granting it the right to show an agreed percentage of national films, varying from 20% in the capital to 50% in other parts of the country.

First attempts to create a National Cinema.

The attempts to organise a national cinema in execution of the decisions taken by the national authorities and to justify their taking possession of the film industry may be summarised as follows :

The first attempts date back to 1936. Uruguay had stood aloof from the development of the cinema, from the time of its birth up to the advent of the major achievements of the silent film, without manifesting the slightest interest in any matters connected with film production. This absence of interest was certainly not due to indifference on the part of the public at large, for they were quite familiar with such prominent screen stars as Rodolfo Valentino, Pola Negri, Charles Chaplin, May MacAvoy and Ramon Novarro.

On this point, statistics are thoroughly convincing. In 1911, picture-houses were attended by 1 649 300 spectators; in 1927, this figure had increased to 3 500 000. Then came the extraordinary discovery of the talking film, and with it the steady rise in the number of spectators. But the apathetic attitude of those responsible for the allocation of national funds remained just as complete as before towards the film industry. The number of spectators admitted to Uruguayan cinemas nevertheless rose from 3 500 000 in 1927 to 5 million and a half in 1936.

It was during 1936, when Chaplin presented his *Modern Times*, that the first production by our country made its appearance. Strange to say, however, while the "talkies" were spreading everywhere and while films were now talking, singing and reproducing sound in a thousand or more ways, Uruguay.... produced its first silent film. This anachronistic spedimen of national film work was entitled *Del pingo al volante:* it was a curious museum exhibit and today would give us the same impression as Edison's Black Mary experiments.

It was in the same conditions of silence and lack of technical means that the second national film was produced: *El pequeño héroe del Arroyo de Oro.*

This film might almost be classed as a documentary, for it is based on a historical episode which stirred the national mind on account of the heroism shown by a young leading character who, at the cost of his life, rescued his little sister from the hands of criminals.

The pioneers of cinema in Uruguay devoted their enthusiasm to interesting men in a position to finance film undertakings. Their efforts led to the production and presentation of two new national films. The first, *Vocación*, was shown at the Rex Theatre, and the second, *Soltero soy*

feliz, at the Embassador. Both of these films have one point in common: deplorable technique. Taken with an obsolete camera and despite the extremely rudimentary equipment employed, the sound-track of the films was good. We owe these first national sound films more to the ingeniousness and enthusiasm of the producer than to the use of the technique that had so far triumphed in the cinema world.

That man was Emilio Peruzzi, who, a short time before, had come to Uruguay with the firm intention of making films, regardless of the heavy sacrifices such work might involve. He was assisted by J. E. Errecart. The two films were directed by the national singer, Rina Massardi — who filled the star role in one of them — and by Dr. Juan Carlos Patron.

When preparing these two films, the two directors relied on the help and enthusiastic co-operation of a group of well-known artists: Victor Damiani, Ramon Collazo, Pedro Becco, Amanda Ledesma, Alberto Vila, P. Mirassou, Luis Fatorusso and Heraclio Sena. It would have been difficult for these who saw these films to realise what an arduous task these artists were obliged to fulfil in order to make a success of their undertaking.

For they lacked not only indispensable facilities, in the matter of materiel as well as in personnel, but were also obliged to fight the indifference, and in many cases the hostility, of a milieu which systematically ignored them. In spite of all these handicaps, which put a stop to national film production in 1938, a new film made its appearance in 1939. The whole of this film, *Radio Candelario*, consisted of exterior scenes, for since the rudimentary and improvised Cineton studios had gone out of existence, no others were available. The director and leading part of this original production was Eduardo de Pauli, a popular radio star. He was assisted by a few local inhabitants and advised on technical points by Henry Maurice. This film, which was shown at the Cervantes Cinema, marked the suspension of all national film activity for a long time.

Attracted by the exceptional position and conditions offered by Uruguay for the making of films, the Roca brothers arrived later from Argentina. Though they set to work with great enthusiasm, they failed to secure the economic aid they needed. We are nevertheless indebted to them for a certain measure of technical progress and the installation of equipment in a building which gradually took on the aspect of a studio.

In 1947, Jaime Prades, a Uruguayan residing in Argentina and closely associated with the cinema activities of that country, landed at Montevideo, accompanied by director Saraceni and the actor Armando Bo.

It was at this date that the Spanish version of *The Three Musketeers* was begun on the premises of the Roca brothers (Orion Studios) for the account of an Argentine company, "Latinoamericanos". The film was later regarded as an Argentino-Uruguayan production, for though the camera work was done in Uruguay, all laboratory work had to be done in Argentina, no suitable laboratories being available in our country. This film is an original contribution to what might be called "Rioplatense" cinema. It is also a gratifying precedent, full of promise for the future.

That same year saw the arrival of a film professional possessing many years' experience acquired in Europe and Argentina: our fellow-countryman Joaquin Martinez Arboleya. He was sent by the "Emelco" Company, a powerful film organisation, to reorganise their Uruguayan branch, and this technician very rapidly speeded up its work in a most remarkable manner.

The *Noticiero Emelco-Sucesos de las Américas*, which played an essential part in the field of national information, very soon rose to a position of great prestige.

All this seemed to indicate that national film production was now on the road to success. There was, moreover, good reason to hope that this was the case since, through the initiative of Martinez Arboleya, a strong cinema company had been constituted, whose statutes had been very rapidly approved and whose shares had been taken up by investors. The company had acquired, in the vicinity of the aristocratic seaside resort at Carrasco, a 32 hectare site where it was proposed to establish the nucleus of the future Film City.

But of this powerful company and its ambitious plans, there soon remained nothing but plots of land with their imposing panels bearing the words "Garden City". The great cinema undertaking had become a concern for the purchase and sale of land, thanks to the good will of the shareholders who no doubt thought that this change in the company's object meant a sounder guarantee for their money.

In 1947, another company, known as the "Cumbre S. A.", was formed and began work on the film *Asi te deseo*, based on the theme of Pirandello's drama, under the direction of Garcia Villar (an Argentine), with Roberto Airaldi and Ana Clara Bell in the leading parts; it was in this film that the latter made her first appearance before becoming a Uruguayan star.

Asi te deseo was the only film that the "Cumbre S. A." ever produced, for like the previous companies it failed on account of the distributors and through the inertia of our legislators who make no effort to protect the cinema as a national industry incapable of fighting unaided against strong and well-organised competition from abroad.

Notwithstanding all these setbacks, Martinez Arboleya cherished the hope of creating a national cinema and of

Number 6

of the International Film Review will be mostly devoted to the

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

organising a new series of news-reels known by the name "Uruguay al dia", which thoroughly deserves its present popularity. He also founded the firm "Montevideo Films", which uses the "Orion" studios installed by the Roca brothers; it was in these studios that he made the film *Esta tierra es mia* at the beginning of 1948. This film, on which a great variety of opinions were expressed by the critics, has, without any doubt whatsoever, the merit of having been interpreted entirely by national actors and actresses. It marks the first effort in the direction of really national production. Development and all the laboratory work were carried out in Uruguay, for while the film was being made the first national automatic laboratory was being equipped. Those taking part in this production were Gloria Romero, Enrique Guarnero, Luis Fatorusso, Carlos Rossi, etc. The music was written by one of our most distinguidhed composers: Eduardo Fabini, Giucci and Giacossa were responsible for the adaptation.

At the present moment, two films are being shown: *Detective a Contramano* and *El Ladron de Sueños*, the results of national effort and capital which are endeavouring to ensure the progress of an industry still in its infancy.

It was only right that these facts should be set forth in a brief historical survey of Uruguayan cinema, which now seems to be taking the same paths as those which its elder brother, Argentine cinema, has followed for so many years.

PEDRO BERETCHE GUTIERREZ
Critic of "El Bien Público".

LETTER FROM INDIA

"GNANA SOUNDARI"

BY

Father T. PURAKEL, S. J.*

"This picture will revolutionise the film industry in this country; it has vindicated the opinion of some after all a film without alluring love scenes can be acceptable to all classes and kinds of people."

"Father, you know Joseph Thaliath; you will render a great service to the people of this country if you can persuade him to produce some more pictures like Gnana Soundari. It is really superb."

"When I heard everywhere the songs from Gnana Soundari by all classes of people — shepherd boys, and girls, peasants, labourers returning from factories, in almost every family and club where there is a gramophone, I said to myself, the producer of this film has done more good than some of the preachers."

These are only some of the opinions I have heard from Catholic priests, university professors, bankers and merchants.

Gnana Soundari is a girl who lost her mother when young. She had been taught to have a tender love for God and Mary, the mother of Jesus who became man to teach men the path to true happiness. When she was molested by her step-mother she put her confidence in Jesus and Mary. She overcame all difficulties and enjoyed real happiness on account of her confidence in God.

When I saw the picture I found perfect silence even among the street boys of whom there were about a thousand. I was told that this was the case everywhere it was shown. Needless to say that the deep silence was the sign of great appreciation. It has captivated the heart and imagination of even uncultured people. Thousands have seen this picture more than ten times within the short period of six months. This is a proof that men of all grades are by nature aspiring after God's goodness and protection.

India produces now every year nearly the same number of pictures as the United States of America. Unless the moral and artistic tone of these productions is as good as that of Gnana Soundari, it will not only be a waste of money and energy, but a cause of moral harm to humanity. Films can be attractive without being unclean.

The "Citadel Film Corporation", of which Joseph Thaliath Jr. is the Managing Director, has leased the Southern Studios of Madras for five years, with an option to continue for another three years. "Citadel Corporation's" next film has been begun in another studio but will be completed in the Southern Studios.

St. Xavier's College, Palamcottah, Southern India.

THE INDIAN FILM INDUSTRY

(This article is condensed from a thesis written on the same subject by the author for the degree of Ph. D. of the Bombay University in 1949.)

The saga of the Indian film is a colourful record spread over a period of thirty-six years. Brimming with interesting events and efforts of more adventurers who have entered in it than in probably any other industry in India, a comprehensive account oft it could hardly be given in the limited scope of a brief article. All that can be attempted is to give a fleeting glimpse of some of the fascinating facts of the little known Indian film.

The motion-picture first came to India through the impact of the West and the early pictures were of foreign origin. As far back as June-July 1896, the „Cinémathographe" made its first appearance in Bombay in the form of short scenes depicting motion on

the screen. They were, however, only casual shows. Regular performances were not given till 1907. Even then in those early days very few were willing to risk finance in the "disreputable" show business, much less invest in the production of an Indian film.

The indigenous film industry owes its birth to the perseverance and foresightedness of the pioneer, D. G. Phalke, who after surmounting innumerable difficulties gave to the people their first Indian film — *Harishchandra* — in 1913. Based on a story from the Hindu mythology and about 3700 feet long, it had its premiere at the Coronation Cinema, Bombay. It was so popular that it proved a veritable gold mine.

Thereafter progress was rapid. Numerous companies and cinemas sprang up to meet a new demand. Though the number of Indian films produced was negligible compared to the imported ones, their popularity was undoubted. The Government of India realizing this and fearing the harmful influences of the cinema, passed the Indian Cinemathograph Act in 1918. This Act gave a legal recognition to the industry and etablished Boards of Film Censors in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Rangoon.

Even then the prevailing conditions were unsatisfactory. No one knew anything authentic about the industry till the Indian Cinemathograph Committee appointed by the Government made a survey in 1927. The purpose of this Committee was "to examine and report on the system of censorship of cinematograph films in India and to consider whether it is desirable that any steps should be taken to encourage the exhibition of films produced within the British Empire generally and the production and exhibition of Indian films in particular."

The Committee found that there were only about 251 permanent cinemas of which about 77 were located in the Bombay Presidency. There were about 21 producing concerns but the output of most of them was irregular. The demand for Indian films was great and the producers were so busy coping with it that they had no time to improve the technique which was primitive.

After a careful investigation into the numerous branches of the cinema, the Committee came to the conclusion that the industry defective as it was in many respects was not altogether negligible and it was vital that the Government should take early steps to guide, control and utilize the potentialities of the cinema. But due to Government's apathy and the non-co-operation of the industry, none of its recommendations were accepted and the "blue-book" was shelved among the forgotten documents.

The appointment of the Indian Cinematograph Committee marks the close of one phase in the history of the cinema in India, for it coincided with the advent of sound. With the release in 1931 of the firlt Indian talkie *Alam Ara* produced by the Imperial Film Company, Bombay, a new page had been written in the annals of the Indian film.

Between 1934 and 1939 the talkies firmly established themselves and the industry rapidly expanded rising to the position of the eighth largest industry in India, with Bombay as the main centre of production. There was a rise in production and innovations in colour, dubbing and cartoon films were attempted. The steady progress of Indian films culminated with the international recognition given to the picture *Sant Tukaram* at the Fifth International Exhibition of Cinematograph Art, Venice 1937. Produced by the Prabhat Film Company, directed by V. Damle and S. Fatehlal, starring Vishnupant Pagnis and based on the life-story of Maharashtra's great saint, this film ranked among the first three best pictures of the world.

In May 1939 Bombay was the venue of a film exhibition and Congress held to celebrate the silver jubilee of the Indian film industry. On its twenty-fifth birthday it had and invested capital of Rs. 170 000 000 and a payroll of 40 000 persons. There were about 75 producing companies whose annual output averaged about 200 feature films. To screen them there were just over a thousand cinemas — 1 100 cinemas in a country with a population of over 350 000 000. About 200 of these theatres were devoted exclusively to foreign films.

World War II inspite of the restrictions it entailed — in raw stock, equipment, screen time and so on — brought to the industry a period of prosperity. The number of films produced and the number of cinemas increased throughout the country, but Bombay was and still remains the hub of the industry. A few Indian films like *Shakuntala* produced and directed by V. Shantaram, *Neecha Nagar* produced by Chetana Anand, *Dharti Ke Lal* produced by the Indian Peoples Theatre Association and directed by K. A. Abbas, *Kalpana* produced and directed by Uday Shankar, *Chandralekha* produced by S. S. Vasan, *Meera* produced by T. Sadasivam and *Chotta Bhai* produced by New Theatres Ltd. have been sent abroad and some of them have won laurels in the international field.

The War also gave a much needed impetus to the production of factual films and a Government Unit was organised to produce documentaries and newsreels for war propaganda. Wound up after the termination of the hostilities, this has once again been revived and is the only organization in India — there are a few private concerns but their output is irregular and intermittent — bringing forth a regular supply of films. Exhibiting one documentary and one newsreel every week all over the country, it has up to date released 32 documentaries including suitable foreign productions and 66 newsreels.

From as far back as 1918 a system of censorship of films based on the British model has been in force in India. The ways and means adopted by Government to exercise some control over the fare offered for mass consumption has not always been satisfactory. The industry, the public and the press have criticised its actions from time to time. Since the termination of World War II the subject of film censorship has come not merely into the limelight, but has been made the topic of heated discussions. The Government of Bombay has taken stringent steps to prevent frivolity and vulgarity on the screen, to adapt it to its policy

of prohibition and to raise the general standard of Indian films. Its action has aroused a great deal of comment both from the industry and the public, and it remains to be seen how the latest developments — the establishment of a Central Board of Film Censors and certifying films for 'Universal' and 'Adult' exhibitions — will help in solving the problem of the freedom of the screen.

Time and again interested foreign concerns have tried to produce films in India or to dub their films in Hindustani with the intention of tapping a lucrative market but so far with little success. Notable exceptions to this, however, were *Baghdad-ka-Chor,* Western India Theatres Ltd. Hindi dubbed version of Sir Alexander Korda's famous Arabian Nights fantasy, *The Thief of Baghdad* and R. K. O. Radio Pictures Hindustani dubbed version of "Tarzan and the Leopard Woman". The success of these ventures has shown what can be done and the Indian trade awaits with trepidation the threatened invasion, but one hopes, will take up the challenge.

Today not only is the Indian film industry the second largest in the world, ranking next to the U.S.A., but its three main producing groups located in the West, East and the South, form more or less three independent industries, each almost as large as any in Europe. Nevertheless Bombay is the main centre of the film industry in India with an average of about 63% of production centred there since 1940. Of the Rs. 150 000 000 invested in the film industry as a whole today about Rs. 80 000 000 to Rs. 90 000 000 or 53% is invested in Bombay alone. There are about 400 producing companies in India, 60% of which are located in Bombay Province. All told there are 67 studios in India, 22 in Bombay, 19 in Madras, 13 in Calcutta, 3 in Madura and two each in Poona, Mysore, Kolhapur, Coimbatore and Salem. They are all owned by Indians and no foreign capital is invested in them. There is no record of the exact number of stages but on an average each studio has two stages. All the studios are in general reasonably well equipped. There are about 25 laboratories in India. Most of them are attached to studios but a few independent ones take outside orders.

On an average India produces about 250 feature films a year. These films are distributed through regional distribution circuits which divide the whole of India in five fairly distinct areas grouped around the main production centres.

There are over 400 distributing companies and agencies all privately owned. Of these ten represent the main American concerns and one British. On an average about 225 American and 25 British films are distributed. Occasionally a European film is shown. There is very little commercial 16mm distribution.

The total number of cinemas in India is approximately 2 000 of which about 1 750 are permanent 35 mm cinemas, the remaining being mostly mobile units and seasonal cinemas. Their total seating capacity is estimated at about 1 400 000 — hopelessly inadequate to meet the needs of a population of 400 000 000.

The partition of the country has affected the film industry considerably. Though conditions have now returned to normal, finance is still shy. However, with a vast population as yet untouched by films there is great scope for future development and expansion.

While the industry is on the threshold of a new era, the Indian Government has undertaken an enquiry into its conditions. Its terms of reference are to enquire into the growth and organization of the industry and indicate the lines of future development; to enquire into the possibility of the manufacture of raw film and cinematographic equipment in India; and to examine what measures should be adopted to enable films in India to develop into an effective instrument for the promotion of national culture, education and healthy entertainment. At present everyone interested is waiting to see the outcome of this enquiry on which depends much of the future of the Indian film industry.

Miss PANNA SHAH
Ph. D., Bombay

LETTERS FROM JAPAN

THE CINEMA IN JAPAN

BY

TATSUO SAITO

Tatsuo Saito, born at Tokyo in 1902, lived in Singapore from the age of 16 years till he was 21. Back in Japan he began his career as an actor in comedy. He received various prizes for his roles in 1935 and 1937 and appeared in 500 Japanese films.

In giving you a brief outline of film activity in Japan I wish first to say that it is hoped that the year 1950 may be a turning point in the whole Japanese film industry. There are about 2000 cinemas in Japan; the largest with more than 1000 seating capacity as well as a great number of smaller halls. There are five studios in Tokyo and three at Kyoto— each studio having its own cinema for film reviewing. Productions from these studios number about 500 films a year. It is true that these films have not hitherto been shown abroad. The reason is that Japanese films have very little action in them. For the most part, the actors and actresses are seated on straw mats around a table in discussion and only get up to open or close a door. The poverty of the scenarios renders exploitation of Japanese films unlikely. Furthermore, our producers have little money at their disposal and thus they are unable to make films to compete with

those seen in America, France or other countries. In addition our camera equipment is very poor and it often astonishes me that with such machines our technicians are able to produce such good photography.

The Japanese public itself is anxious to see films that are of a superior quality and for this reason more and more foreign films are being imported. The main problem is to produce here in Japan films made on a budget that will enable producers to export them.

At the moment I am working with Sessue Hayakawa at the "Dare Studios" in Kyoto and I hope the result will be satisfactory.

Among the foreign films that we have seen here, those which I liked best were the French *La Grande Illusion* and the American *Best Years of our Lives*. I ought to say that among the various American, British and French films that I have seen, it is the French that I prefer; their mentality approximates most nearly to the Japanese. Generally I have to see a French film twice for, not speaking the language, I cannot follow the dialogue and have to divide my attention between the visuals and the Japanese sub-titles. The English dialogue makes things easier for me when I see an American or British film.

THE CINEMA CODE

BY

KIKOU YAMATA

Since last summer the Japanese cinema has possessed its own moral code. It was a voluntary undertaking on the part of Japanese producers to stem the wave of eroticism which has been affecting film technicians since the end of the war. It is also an effort to raise the intellectual and emotional level of films, and to aim at the production of better films which might play a prominent part in the renaissance of a Japanese spirit purified both from nationalist excesses and the inert despair of defeat.

Producers therefore do not intend to leave their films to the censorship, but to examine their own consciences themselves. It was about time.

Confusing moral licence with democracy, liberty with immorality, the studios were turning out, since the end of the war, strange films for a population more in need of strengthening and uplifting than of this animated demoralisation. Interpreting Sartre's existentialism by a pessimistic realism, the Japanese cinema insisted painfully on the moral tragedies of the defeat. The prostitution of women was shown taking place in the streets at night, a fairly novel sight for a country which up till then preferred to relegate it to reserved quarters or special houses.

They played upon the attraction of the nude which took on a new value of sexual rather than of aesthetic appeal. The contrast of the directives which prevailed in wartime Japan appeared to them as an innovation of freedom. For during the war even nude figures in paintings on exhibition had very nearly been suppressed.

These films, with several fleeting pictures of models taking up a pose, and with the help of publicity, attracted the public. Film makers doubtless had the excuse that they were escaping from the conformity which had restrained them during the period of military censorship, and which had forced on them patriotic subjects and official lessons in heroism.

From present production it is gathered that no spirit of resistance against occupation is shown in Japan, but rather an apathy and discouragement which are easily accepted.

On the other hand 'pacifically-minded" films appeared to be of mediocre quality; poor scenarios taken from novels of no literary value, sentimentality of the rosewater variety, which contrasted annoyingly with the standard of imported foreign films. The public compared them, and turned its favour towards these foreign productions which provided better fare for its curiosity and its mind.

The moral code of the Japanese producers must therefore raise both the literary standard of scenarios and their psychological content. In the first quarter of 1949, out of seventy-one new films, only four or five could be recommended.

From now on the producers will rely on this professional committee to sift production and to impose their voluntary code. This committee consists above all of the producers of all the big companies with four associate directors to one representative of the distributors.

Will they be able to exercise a real influence? Will it be commercially possible to suppress sexual films and films of *samourais* brandishing their sabres, sadistic films, films which present crimes, all those sensational films which make money ?

The Japanese press, which welcomes favourably the setting up of the Cinema Code, fears disappointments when it comes to the point of applying it. In actual fact, the committee only examines the scenario. What will happen when certain scenes alter the tone of these scenarios ?

With their innate artistic sentiment, the Japanese are remarkable photographers. It is to be hoped that the script-writers will give them the opportunity to illustrate some fine works. The directors moreover have talent enough to be able to train stars, it is they who direct the stars rather than the stars imposing their own personality.

Together with a great spiritual effort on the part of Japan will go most certainly an art of the Cinema, worthy of the traditions of the Nô plays, the Bunraku marionettes and the plays of Kabuki.

NEWS OF THE CINEMA

Last summer for the first time, the Japanese public was able to see the war from the other side. *Japan, Awake!* showed the chief events of the war in the Pacific, as they had not been imaginable in the home islands. Among the events portrayed were the explosions of the two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the blowing up of a Japanese cruiser, the battle of Okinawa and the landing of United States Marines at Iyojima where so many lost their lives before the Stars and Stripes flew from the summit of Mount Suribachi.

This film is a ZM production, made by photographer Gene Zenier of Warner-Pathé News, and Ian Mustu from the Tokyo United Press office. Zenier was attached to the American Navy during the war.

Among the most eagerly awaited films at present are *Spring Evening* (Shochikou), inspired by a western theme, and *Second Love*, which deals with the problem of returned prisoners from Russia in the setting of the story of a young couple separated by war.

BELGIUM

NATIONAL PRODUCTION

It would be useless to pretend that the present crisis in the Belgian film industry is not the gravest it has yet had to face. It is true that 13 entertainment films have been made since the Liberation, but our studios have been closed down for over a year now, and our two newest films have yet to find a hall willing to run them.

Nevertheless, there is more talk of national production than ever before. A recent press conference organised by the producers of the Chambre Syndicale let loose a flood of polemic, of which a calm objectivity was not the most noticeable feature. The producers say to the press: help us in our efforts to make the government understand our difficulties, and we shall be able to give you good films. The press say: give us good films and we will help you, going on to cite one national production after another as evidence that the industry is not worth helping. Reform is essential, both from the cultural and the economic aspect. Every year an imposing amount of currency is sent abroad to pay for the 750 odd films which have free entry into the country, while there is no protective legislation at all for Belgian films, even documentaries. And in this sphere at least the high reputation of our film makers cannot be denied. Moreover, even though film making is at a standstill our producers are throwing all their energy into the effort to create favourable conditions for the setting-up of a national production. Their efforts will shortly result in a measure of protection in the form of relief from taxation on Belgian films shown here. The value of this measure will probably be more symbolical than actual, but it is not without importance, bearing in mind that the Exchequer's share is greater than that of the producer and is assessed by rule of thumb, according to the theatre's capacity !

How can national production be turned into a reality? The possibilities are, naturally, widely divergent. Should we confine ourselves exclusively to Belgian films, or would it be better to embark upon co-production, and if so, should the foreign or the national element predominate? Should the aim be a modest output, the costs of which can be recovered at home, or the making of prestige films in a bid to capture foreign markets? These are arguable and much discussed points, with a good deal to be said both for and against them all.

One thing is certain: this measure will indicate government confidence in the industry, and confidence attracts capital. It is, however, symptomatic that we are forced to admit that the idea of this form of government protection has not been unreservedly welcomed. Some would ask for a qualitative clause, and the argument is specious enough: the Belgian cinema has not yet produced anything of value, and relief from taxation would be putting a premium on mediocrity, and would encourage the unprogressive elements in the industry. There are many, however, who, keenly aware of the poor results obtained to date, only await the opportunity to do better. Some who have proved themselves in the documentary field would turn to entertainment films if the conditions were better. Relief from taxation would be the first step towards improvement: the progressives will benefit; so will the others, inevitably. But the one will compensate for the other.

Leo Lunders.

NEWS ITEMS

Henri Storck is to make a film entitled *Het Dwaalich (Will-o'-the-wisp)*, an adaptation of Willem Elsschot's book, and a second to be called *Bula Matari*, a sort of documentary on the heroic Stanley expedition and the Congo. Storck is also making preparations for a joint Franco-Belgian production in colour: *Tyl Ulenspiegel*, based on Charles Decoster's famous novel.

Charles Dekenkeleire is nearing the completion of his colour film on Breughel's painting *Census in Bethlehem* (Brussels Museum).

André Cauvin is working on *Un Chef-d'oeuvre retrouvé (A Masterpiece Recovered)*, the adventure that befell the picture "The Holy Lamb" found in a salt-mine and recently repatriated.

ECHOES FROM GERMANY

THE RECOVERY OF TRUTH

One of the most urgent problems facing documentary film producers is how to overcome the general public's dislike of documentary films. This dislike is largely due to the fact that most of them are made by state departments, professors, teachers, and what not, and tell the public what to think, what to do and how to behave. They adopt a teacher-pupil attitude towards the public who inevitably resent, consciously or unconsciously, being put in a position of inferiority. Also in this propaganda-ridden world the public through bitter experience have come to suspect that all propaganda and all special pleading is only half true at the best and most likely entirely phoney. This instinctive reaction takes place even when the film-maker imagines he has made out a logical case for his special plea. Quite other laws operate in the cinema from those of the classroom.

When we look at the general run of documentary films being produced to-day we must admit that the public dislike of them is thoroughly justified. A very large percentage are merely recorded lectures with pictures added to illustrate them and fill up the screen while the public is talked at. A fundamental law of film-making is that the imagination of the public must be led by the picture and not by the argument of the speaker. This law must be better observed if the documentary film movement is to retain its vitality.

A film is not a series of impressions on the screen but a series of impressions on the mind of an audience. There-

fore pictures which do not make an impression, more particularly an impression which bears a correct proportion to the combined effect intended, should be discarded.

It is not easy to break with a well established tradition. An opportunity, though a fleeting one, presented itself when British Information Services of the Control Commission decided to establish documentary film production in Germany in January 1948.

Germany was the most difficult of all countries in which to establish documentary films, but if it had succeeded, there might have been far-reaching consequences for the future of Europe. Here, obviously, nothing but the truth would do. The people of the most propaganda-ridden of the Western nations were sick of propaganda. They did not believe half of what they read in the newspapers or heard over their radios, unless it lent colour to some personal grievance, and if they scented the least propaganda in a film they closed their eyes and ears and waited for the next one. Nothing could be accomplished by propaganda, and therefore the only possible solution was the recovery of truth.

The first necessity, as only German technicians were to be employed, was to form a group of technicians, capable of observing and recording objectively what they saw. There was, besides a demoralised entertainment film industry, the remains of a flourishing "Kultur" film movement. Kultur films were sometimes excellent technically, but in content were purely escapist. They would show, for example, beautiful façades of buildings, but took no interest in the people living in them, and the sun usually sank romantically in a lake at the end. They lulled to sleep any awakening spark of social responsibility by depicting a world without human problems. They were strongly supported by the Nazis who seemed instinctively to foster every influence that drew the people further from reality.

It was found that technicians accustomed to making Kultur films were quite incapable of making objective documentary films, and therefore young writers and directors for the new group had to be recruited who had not been influenced by old methods of production. It was explained to them that they would never be called upon to make propaganda or tendentious films, and that the sole object was to study each vital problem and try to show the truth about it.

The first question that anyone asks who wishes like Pontius Pilate to shirk responsibility is "what is truth" ?

Naturally we did not expect to find the truth without a great deal of trouble, or ever to find all of it, but we made it our guiding principle to find as much of it as possible. We were all agreed, for example, that the following propositions were true :

— It is good to have wholesome food and bad to be hungry;
— it is good to work and bad to be out of work;
— it is good to enjoy liberty of thought and bad to be in fear of the Gestapo; !
— it is good to have a home of one's own and bad to live in an overcrowded wooden barrack.

On this simple basis, then, we went to work.

Student writers were sent to sit in the housing offices, the welfare offices, the labour-exchanges, and were taught to bring back factual accounts of what they saw. Films were made on labour problems in the Ruhr, on living conditions of young miners, on the harsh treatment by local officials of returning prisoners of war, on the post-war mentality and unemployment problem in the former naval base of Wilhelmshaven, on frontier problems at Aachen where large numbers of children engage in smuggling.

The most ambitious production was an objective report on the refugee situation which was planned as one of a series covering various aspects of Germany's gravest problem. Only one was completed, but it has been shown at many conferences and is playing a significant part in arousing official awareness to the urgency of the situation. It is also being shown in a dozen different countries, notably in the United States where there are 200 prints in non-theatrical distribution. Incidently it is also raising enormous funds for refugee relief schemes.

The traditional public dislike of documentary films, and to seeing serious problems on the screen, is completely overcome by these films. On the contrary, the public follow them with intense interest. The question of their being propaganda simply does not arise, as they are obviously true, and the public see in them the expression of their own thoughts and feelings. It is abundantly proved that the public are ready to face facts on the screen, even unpleasant facts, so long as they are not exploited for propaganda purposes.

The German press gave the venture their wholehearted support, and it seemed for a moment that the newly created documentary film movement would become a powerful instrument, capable of dispelling widespread illusions and misconceptions with their accompanying hatreds, and would play a vital part in the reconstruction of Germany and therefore of Europe. But now a final and decisive development took place. The resentment usually felt by the public towards tendentious documentary films was now felt in an aggravated form by those in authority for documentary films devoted to the truth, though probably in their case also it was to a great extent unconscious. This is a reaction which might have been foreseen, but was not. Obviously those accustomed to expound their views to the public are likely to resent the public finding its own means of expression. Anyone who is afraid of change, or of facing unpalatable facts, or who lives by propaganda, or who has any kind of an axe to grind at the public expense, must oppose the expression of the truth before which all misrepresentation fades.

The experiment was brought abruptly to an and, but at least it got far enough to prove that it can be done. The question now arises, who is going to sponsor and pay for this work to be continued? Here is a worthy enterprise for anyone who recognises that only the unvarnished truth can help us to clear the way for the reconstruction of our shattered world on sure foundations.

CAT BORG
Hamburg

A FILM-PRODUCING FIRM VERSUS THE CATHOLIC "FILMDIENST"

A Hamburg film company has announced its intention of taking legal proceedings against the *Filmdienst*, the journal published by the Catholic Film Commission, on the grounds of commercial prejudice and interference with the freedom of the film.

The *Filmdienst* put the film *Das Mädchen und der Vagabund* ("The Girl and the Vagabond"), produced by the recently-formed Film-Union (Rolf Meyer), in Class 3, thus indicating that it was "not to be recommended". The reason was that this film advocates free union and, from the

moral standpoint exercises a pernicious influence on young people. The press department of the film firm cited has spoken of "clerical film censorship" and referred to the coming court proceedings as "one of the most interesting post-war cases and one of the most significant from the point of view of cultural policy."

The Catholic Film Commission in Germany wishes to make it quite clear that it exercises no censorship, but merely advises, as has been customary for many years in thirty-three countries of the world. This international custom, moreover, corresponds in Catholic circles to an express invitation issued in the pontifical encyclical concerning the cinema, in which it was stated that "the faithful must be informed about films that are recommended for all persons, about those which are recommended subject to certain reservations and those which are harmful or definitely bad."

According to Archbishop Berning, rapporteur on film questions at the Fulda episcopal congress, the views expressed by the Catholic Film Commission constitute "advice given by the Church and does not bind under sin".

The pronouncement of the ecclesiastical authorities on this film, which glorifies free love and, from the moral angle, exerts a deplorable influence on youth, is not the only one of its kind that we have had in Germany. In support of this statement, we may mention a journal that specialises in film articles and which certainly cannot be accused of working under clerical influence; we refer to the technical review *Filmpostarchiv*, of Francfort-am-Main. In this review, M. Helmut Müller, the well-known critic, expresses the following opinion on the film in question : "This film is thoroughly disappointing. Its action is laborious. Wherever the vagabond appears, the girls promptly and unhesitatingly fall into his arms. We said that the scenario produces a bad impression; it is because it distorts real life by depicting it in too simplistic a form." The appreciations by the Catholic Film Commission — and this point is continually emphasised — are of an essentially *religious and moral* character and it is only as a secondary consideration that they pass judgment on the artistic merit of the film. In this matter of religious and moral judgment, the Catholic Film Commission claims to be absolutely competent. The Pope assigned to it a mission for such work, which, moreover, met the wishes of, and was approved by, all German bishops.

The Catholic Film Commission and its organ *Filmdienst* will calmly await the result of this case.

If a film producer wishes to avoid such judgments, which are detrimental to his commercial interests, he has only to turn out better films and the same Commission will give him its support; all who remember *Nachtwache* will appreciate this fact.

We are very much inclined to think that, by instituting these proceedings, the film company is seeking, by easy methods, to make a greater success of a film that has fallen short of its aim.

As for interfering with the freedom of the film, we shall continue to say openly in Germany what films are morally harmful or even morally bad. Truth can never impair freedom, and this applies just as much to films as to any other field of activity. The impartial and judicious work that is being carried on by the Catholic Film Commission is increasingly recognised in extensive circles by producers, film distributors, exhibitors and the public. It will continue to help the film industry.

Anybody wishing to form an opinion regarding the advice given to the Catholic public by the Catholic Film Commission will find a good opportunity of doing so by consulting a most valuable publication: At Düsseldorf, where the Catholic Film Commission for Germany has its headquarters (Prinz Georgstraße 44), a special number of *Filmdienst* has just been issued; it contains appreciations from the moral and religious standpoint on nearly 1100 German and foreign films now being shown. This special number, which costs only 50 DM., furnishes a clear proof of the sincerity of our remarks, namely that the Catholic Film Commission by no means assails freedom; on the contrary, it is a powerful factor contributing to the dissemination of films.

ERICH RAUDISCH

The Secret of Success. The writer of the above article, Erich Raudisch, has tried to determine the reasons why certain religious films have scored a success. Is it because public taste has changed? In 1949, it was *Bernadette* which made the greatest hit with the German public. Was it because the scenario was based on the novel of a famous author? or was the success due to the sensational character of the subject? It would seem rather that the religious factor has a greater influence when the apologetic intentions are not too obvious. Producers realised this when they designed their great spectacular films staging the persecution of the early Christians *(Quo Vadis, Fabiola)*. Simultaneously with the religious emotion and the admiration for courage that such films arouse, however, the instinct for cruelty also finds a certain stimulation and the spectator whose mind has remained healthy cannot but feel disappointment. It was in order to avoid surprises of this kind that *Filmdienst* (Catholic) (Düsseldorf, Prinz Georgstraße 44) and *Evangelischer Film-Beobachter* (Protestant) (Munich, 22, Himmelreichstraße 4) were founded in Germany. Both of these journals recommend the best films and so contribute to their success. Producers must be made to understand that an unclean film does not pay.

Considered from this standpoint, why is *Nachtwache* a success? For the first time since the war, a religious subject is handled, in Germany, in a contemporary setting. Secondly, fundamental religious problems such as the incomprehensible character of human suffering receive a profound and understanding treatment. Lastly, the film is not a sermon; it does not seek to convert, but simply to show that religious problems exist. For these reasons, it seems that this film should be equally successful beyond the frontiers of Germany.

* * *

Similarly, *Antwort des Herzens*, the German *Caritas* documentary, which was recently shown for the first time, in Munich, creates a deep impression on the public.

FRANCE

FROM "LA BEAUTE DU DIABLE" TO "LA MARIE DU PORT"

The "Cannes Week" having come to an end, French cinema lost no time in playing its best trump cards. The season was formally opened at the Opera, in the presence of the President of the Republic, with René Clair's Italo-French co-production *La Beauté du Diable*, no doubt the most ambitious film of 1950. We shall comment upon this work in a later article; its quality, masterly presentation and spiritual content have already captured the attention of the public.

After René Clair, H. G. Clouzot showed his friends a *divertissement* inspired by the Golden Age of the silent film: *Miquette et sa mère*, a wild disheveled comedy in which the youthful talent of Danièle Delorme is definitely impressed on our memory. It is a very clever film, introducing here and there those little touches characteristic of Clouzot's mental style, but which remain inexplicable, just as much as the *divertissement: Occupe-toi d'Amélie*, by Claude Autant-Lara, another vaudeville which, for no plausible reason, was dug up by the cinema world.

J. P. Melville has produced his second film: *Les Enfants terribles*, an adaptation of the novel by Jean Cocteau. We shall deal later with the reservations that must be made regarding this film in all its aspects. Just as *Orphée* so cleverly contributed to maintaining Cocteau's reputation as a demiurge, so these loquacious films help to destroy it.

Serge de Poligny has also presented his latest film: *La soif des hommes*, an impeccable composition which, for the masterly way in which it tells a story, can be classed as unique among the works directed by the rising generation of cineasts in France. As always — apart from *Le Baron Fantôme* — the film fails in its scenario, which, in its dramatic impulses, falls far short of the pictures Poligny has in mind.

Marcel Carné's new film: *La Marie du Port*, based on a book by Simenon, completes this season's inaugural list of productions. It was no doubt Carné's intention to make a "commercial" film, shorn of all meanness, of course, but calculated to dispel the unfortunate but current idea that he is the "most expensive" of French film directors. It has not destroyed however the myth of the immorality of his work.

It is stated, in film circles, that more than forty theme films and nearly a hundred documentaries are awaiting a more and more problematical release. This state of affairs is serious, for it discourages production and handicaps directors' efforts, for though these directors may not possess the genius of those at the top of the ladder they could nevertheless accomplish useful and straightforward work as capable and conscientious artisans.

Furthermore, the big films — "locomotive films", as they are called in the picturesque commercial language — are not of such value as to draw the public into a resumption of cinema activity. French production consequently remains in a state of suspense, hoping that films like *Lady Paname*, *Une Valse de Paris*, *Ballerina* and five or six other good films will take their place alongside *La Beauté du Diable* — a triumph of the very principle of co-production so distasteful to all the mediocre members of the profession.

René Clément is credited with a drastic criticism of French production in the following sally :

— Clouzot, he said, should have made *La Marie du Port;* René Clair *Miquette et sa mère*, and Carné *La Beauté du Diable.*

This is perhaps quite true, if we add that Duvivier ought to have made *Au delà des grilles*, and Clément *Au royaume des cieux.*

But, after all, the essential point is that willy-nilly these films should be produced.

* * *

A FORGOTTEN PIONEER
CARDINAL DUBOIS

The very fact that we can write to-day in this review proves that the Church is sympathetically inclined towards the problems of the cinema, and that Catholic society acknowledges the true value of the service which film can render.

It has not always been so: twenty-five years ago it was unusual to find Church dignitaries showing interest in the world of motion pictures. An exception was Cardinal Kordac, Archbishop of Prague, who spared himself no effort to make possible the production of a film in honour of St. Wenceslas, patron Saint of the "Golden City". But it is undoubtedly to Cardinal Dubois that credit for being the first to establish a lasting and constructive liaison between the Catholic Church and the growing art of film making is due. An almost forgotten pioneer in the relations of the Church and the studio, Cardinal Dubois is responsible for nearly all the events which marked the beginning of the liaison which has to-day become a reality. He patronized the first Catholic Cinema congresses: under his auspices were said the first "Messes du Cinéma"; the work of those who wished to make the cineastes conscious of their mission as educators was planned under his watchful guidance, and without his help and support Canon Reymond would never have been able to develop his great work. Finally, Cardinal Dubois was the first Church dignitary to visit those working in the industry and encourage them by his presence; in 1926 he brought the blessing of the Church to producers Gaston Roudes and Marcel Dumont, thus proving the interest taken by the clergy in the adaptation for the screen of *Dédale*, Paul Hervieu's play presenting the argument against divorce.

Since then many ecclesiastical dignitaries have shown a real interest in the cinema and many of the clergy make its affairs part of their work. We must not forget that Cardinal Dubois was their predecessor. Illustrious Primate of Paris, he was the originator of a friendly collaboration between Church and Cinema, and it is only fitting that tribute should be paid here to this eminent figure of the religious world.

Charles Ford.

GREAT BRITAIN

GRAHAM GREENE... FILM CRITIC

Few people realise that before becoming known as the celebrated novelist he is now, Graham Greene established a reputation as a film critic of remarkable competence. Here is an extract from his review of the film Knight without Armour, *by Jacques Feyder, published in* "Night and Day", *September 30th 1937, and quoted by J. G. Reid in his brochure "Catholics and the Films".*

"There is one sequence in *Knight without Armour* which should take its place among the classic moments of the screen — the student of Prague running down from the wood to the dwelling place and meeting his second self coming up with dripping sword between the trees: the perambulator bouncing down Odessa steps: the lovers in Von Stroheim's *Greed* walking along the long breakwater between the grey seas under the drenching rain. The English commissar with his prisoner has reached a small wayside station: the stationmaster tells him a train is due, and presently his repeaten call "Train No. 671! All aboard for Petrograd!" brings the Englishman from the waiting-room to an avenue of empty line, the stationmaster striding beside his imaginary express repeating his mad parrot cry, while the sound track grinds with his proud and gleeful dream. Beautifully shot, adeptly written and finely acted by Mr. Hay Petrie as the station-master, the scene owes a great deal of its authenticity to Mr. Donat's quiet stocky personality. And how Mr. Olivier would have torn into haunted neurotic tatters a later scene in the waiting-room while the commissar recites to his prisoner a poem of Browning's ("Fear Death? To feel the fog in my throat..."), and the Red soldiers pass across the window, come to rape and murder. Mr. Olivier's acting is of the nerves: it demands an audience and a partner: Mr. Donat's acting is so calculated that no tape-measure from nose to lens, no studio rabble of make-up men and continuity girls, no fourth "repeat" from the director affects it. And as to partner — he has in the picture to do without, for Miss Dietrich never acts. She consents to pose: she is marble motive for heroisms and sacrifices: as for acting — that is merely the word for what goes on all round her: she leaves it to her servants... No Denham stamp has obliterated M. Feyder's private signature — the very rare use of long shots — long shots used like close-ups to punch an effect home, not as by most directors to get through the duller parts of a narrative. To me the most aesthetically satisfying of all cinematic shots is — in rough script terms — the medium close shot, and this is the distance at which Feyder remains consistently from his characters; close enough for intimacy and far enough for art."

IRISH CINEMA ROUNDABOUT

A first glance at Irish Cinema is apt to leave one cold. Queues increase, cinemas multiply, but in the flood of voices that come from the screen, one looks in vain for the voice of Ireland. The truth is that, unlike Irish drama, literature, dance or music, Irish cinema has yet no separate existence of its own, nor can it hope to have while its destinies are controlled by outside monopoies.l

Time was when Ireland had its regular newsreel service, when Dublin could boast of small but efficient laboratories. A native industry seemed inevitable then, and must have come, had not Ireland left her cinema door wide open, and Hollywood cut through like a good rugger outhalf to touch down at the film-hub in Abbey Street.

It matters little to the prospects of an Irish film industry that the balance of screen power on this side of the Atlantic should now promise to swing in favour of a near-home monopoly. Mr Rank has no intention of setting up a studio or laboratory in Ireland, though he has every intention of owning more Irish cinemas and of dominating Irish screens.

Against such odds, efforts to put Ireland on the film map are almost as spasmodic to-day as when Robert F l a h e r t y brilliantly documented "MAN OF ARAN", or when "THE DAWN" rose brightly over the hills of Killarney on the pioneering shoulders of Tom Cooper.

And yet, there is hope. The occasional visits of British units in recent years have helped to focus attention on Irish film production, and to blow as high as the grey skies that created it the bogey of Ireland's fickle climate. They have given to the screen such films as "ODD MAN OUT", "CAPTAIN BOYCOTT", and "VISITATION". Just now Irish audiences await Paul Vincent C a r r o l l's "SAINTS AND SINNERS", an Irish story with Irish faces, set against the blue background of the Mourne Mountains at Carlingford Lough.

But these isolated productions, no matter how good and welcome, can never substitute for purely native films. Continuity of effort and exact presentation of the Irish scene can only be achieved by a home industry. That has yet to come; though Ireland to-day is not as passive as before in her film outlook. Recent events have put her on her mettle. With Russia barring her entry to U. N. O., and Britain thwarting her march to full nationhood, she has become more determined than ever to speak her mind, and contribute her share in international affairs. She has just made provision for a short-wave radio station. To be logi-al, she must follow with an Irish film industry.

A few small units are already in operation, and recently have been turning out shorts of unquestionable merit.

"NEXT PLEASE" is a road safety effort. "LIFELINE" deals with Irish Shipping. "THE BRIDGE OF THE FORD" is a documentary on historic Drogheda. "ST JOHN BOSCO'S WORK IN IRELAND" is as its name conveys. On this type of film, rather than on features, must Ireland concentrate for the present. Too long has she been thinking of films in terms of big money, big studios, and big stars, with consequent film-scare, loss of hope and inertia.

Leaving the lavish and luxurious to those who can cater for them, Ireland must look rather towards Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland and Italy. Here she will find courage and enterprise resulting in thriving industry. Denmark has an output of over one hundred films a year, Italy debunks the idea that vast studios are an absolute essential to film-making. With cameras and recorders on a mobile basis she has been doing most of her production on actual location.

Taking a lead from here, what Ireland needs most urgently is sound-recording equipment and a laboratory. A proper studio can follow later. At the moment, films are rushed to London for processing. A generation ago Dublin, with her own laboratories, had newsreels which were filmed early in the day ready for showing on her screen at the same night. Given facilities in this respect, the work of the small units already operating could be co-ordinated and expanded. With enterprising sponsorship added, Ireland's spasmodic bursts in the field of film-making could be transformed into a living industry.

On the question of sponsorship, successive Irish Governments have been shy; private enterprises lag behind. Just as one is about to cry out in exasperation — "What's wrong with you, Ireland?" a few Government departments have stepped into line. Public Health has become definitely film-minded. External Affairs are about to undertake "THE YEATS COUNTRY". Local Government has brought hope to Irish hearts and traffic cops with "SAFE CYCLING" and "MR CARELESS GOES TO TOWN". Produced at moderate cost, under the auspices of the *National Film Institute*, the latter films have created a very good impression, and are notable for the fine teamwork of Liam O' Laoghaire (script and direction) and Georg Fleischmann (photography).

With such men and such forces at the helm, Irish film production has begun to lose some of its drab look. Before it can take root and flourish, extra personnel must be trained, production in small countries with like problems must be studied, Government Departments and industries must be geared to the sponsorship wheel, and Irish writers must be attracted to the film as a medium of expression.

What has Ireland to offer in the way of raw material? She has a mode of life and a point-of-view that are often misrepresented, because she does not speak out loud on them herself. They are not mythical or impish as some people, who long to go shadow-dancing with fairies in moonlit meadows, or playing hide-and-seek-with leprechauns to the tune of an Irish jig, imagine. Such fancy tripping is tonic-laden for the tired minds of escapists from reality, and so serves a purpose.

But the real Ireland, like any other country, has her homecrafts and industries, her unemployment and social services, her tourist trade and national festivals. She has her own particular problems of partition, emigration, housing, agricultural and rural development. She has customs and games, peculiar to herself, but of interest to others. In all these the films can serve.

Above all, Ireland has a spiritual life which can offer much to an over-material world. In this way of life at home, and in the work of her missionaries abroad, she has something very special to offer the screens of the world. Andrew Buchanan has provided such a film with "VISITATION". The Killeshandra nuns are following with another. More and more are needed.

It remains for Ireland to set up the first essentials of a film industry as already indicated. Then she will be in there along with other small but progressive countries, giving as well as taking, and not only herself, but the film world will benefit as a result.

When that day comes, Ireland must learn to protect as well as produce. She cannot afford to forget that earlier attempts to establish a film industry were negatived by foreign monopolies. Twenty-five years ago, distribution in Dublin was in the hands of independent renters, who were enterprising enough to tap all the available sources and offer to Irish screens the classics of France, Sweden and Germany, as well as the best from Hollywood. Ireland enjoyed catholicity of taste in those days.

Then sound arrived, Hollywood took over, and the independent distributor was squeezed out. To-day, Abbey Street is bristling with renters representative of British and American interest. *Egan Film Service* and *Iris International Film Agency* survived. Recently, *Abbey Films* set up in spite of the big guns on every side, and are handling a number of features, Irish newsreels and shorts.

The most disturbing factor of the whole situation is that Ireland does not exist as a separate entity as far as British and American distribution is concerned. Her status is that of a province. Her renters' offices, except those of the few independents named above, are mere subordinates with headquarters in London. All films, even American, come via London. All major matters in trade and policy are dictated from London. All profits accruing from distribution in Ireland return to London. And in the case of rentals on American films, a percentage is frozen in London, to England's benefit and America's credit.

In other small countries, like Holland, Denmark and Portugal, distribution is subject to strict control. It is possible that the new Republic of Ireland will increase its supervision in this respect too. At the moment, films entering the country are taxed at the rate of 3d per foot, but rentals leave it without even a sidelong glance from the Revenue department.

Educational films are granted free entry, and this exemption has recently extended to newsreels, which have just reappeared on Irish screens, having been banned by emergency orders during the War.

Before the war 99% of Ireland's film supply came from American and British sources, the proportion being four to one in favour of the former. To-day, with Mr Rank owning seventeen Dublin cinemas including half of the city's firstrun houses, and the Rank production and distribution machines in full cry after Hollywood's monopoly, America's lead has been narrowed down considerably, and Ireland now wonders if the cameras of her own industry will be grinding in time to record a photo-finish, should there be one.

The pace set is so hot, however, that Mr Rank will find it difficult to maintain his lines of supply, without sacrificing quality for quantity. It would be a pity if this did happen, for Irish filmgoers have come to appreciate the more intelligent British films in recent years. What they want most just now is not that one monopoly should supplant another, but that the big guns should be interspersed by fire from home and Continental batteries. The only place where one can see classics from the Continent with any frequency is the *Irish Film Society*, which has a

flourishing membership of over 800 and branches at University College, Dublin, and Trinity College.

The Irish Censorship Act of 1923 still holds good. The Censor himself is a man with an eye for a cut, and scissors which he wields with more fairness than ceremony. A large number of films pass through unscathed; some suffer slight abrasions; others are heavily hacked. Rejected films may go to an Appeals' Board and, if successful, appear before the public in a mutilated form, rendered necessary by the fact that Ireland has no grading system which makes special provision for children. This means that Irish children may see more than they should, and Irish adults less than they could. But Irish legislators claim that "adult only" labels produce more harmful curiosity and circumvention of rules than would justify the "A" and "U" system. In the circumstances, the Irish Censor carries out a difficult job in a very competent manner.

Censorship apart, the exhibition of films in Ireland differs little from that in any other English speaking country. Cinemas have increased appreciably, the total now being 324. The exhibitor is still largely tied to the old system of blind and block booking, the price of one good film being several mediocre ones. Attendances in the twenty-six counties total over one million per week. Boxoffice takings realise more than £ 2.000.000, annually, of which about £ 350.000 goes to the State in entertainments Duty. Add to this the £ 60.000 or £ 70.000 collected in footage tax, and it will be seen that the Government is interested in films to the tune of about £ 400.000 per annum intake. Export rentals are estimated at well over half a million.

The present Government has introduced three changes in legislation since its arrival in office. The first was the removal of increased entertainments tax, with consequent reduction in admission prices. The second granted exemption from tax to sub-standard (16 mm) exhibitors, operating not less than 3 miles from the nearest 35 mm. static cinema, and in places of not more than 500 inhabitants. The third was the abolition of footage tax on newsreels entering the country. The first two rulings were very welcome. The last has been received with mixed feelings. While it has brought the reportage of topical items back with a bang on Irish screens, it is criticised because no special effort is made in it to cater for Irish interests.

Dublin possesses no newsreel theatres proper, nor has it any essentially specialist cinemas since the *Astor* gave way to an ice-cream parlour. The *Regal Rooms* occasionally try to be different with such as "NANOOK OF THE NORTH" "ST. JOHN BOSCO" or "LES ENFANTS DU PARADIS". The *Grafton* shows enterprise in screening worth while recalls. The *Adelphi* is most likely to have any Irish-made films that are doing the rounds. Like the *Capitol* and *Carlton*, it is a first-run house, independent of *Bank Circuit* . The *Capitol* and *Theatre Royal* are the only Dublin houses to specialise in mixed-grill, films and stage combined.

Ireland is making great progress in the 16 mm. field. The *National Film Institute*, aided by a small £ 1.000 per annum Government Grant, has assembled over 800 specially selected educational films, to form one of the finest libraries of its kind in Europe.

It has its Dublin Unit, which shows better types of entertainment and cultural films to members. It also has its mobile units and seven active branches throughout the country. The *Irish Film Society*, apart from its "A" programmes, which are on 35 mm, has "B" (the study of the film) programmes on 16 mm, and this year commences a "D" (documentary) series on the same scale. Altogether, substandard exhibition has caught on to the extent of 150 units in the country areas, many of which will now be able to form circuits with the exemption of tax as mentioned above.

Sub-Standard production is on the up-grade too. Recent creditable efforts are "SILKS AND SATAN" by members of the *Irish Film Society*, "ASYLUM" by the Trinity College group, and "THE TECHNIQUE OF PERMANENT WAVING" by the teacher's production Unit of the *National Film Institute*.

These developments, taken in conjunction with a general stepping up in film criticism and appreciation, are encouraging. The majority of filmgoers are still largely concerned, of course, with the astronomical heights of their favourites, but there is an increased tendency latterly to look behind the stars at the less glamorous and more technical side of film production.

Granted even limited facilities in production, enlightened sponsorship and reasonable protection against outside monopolies, Irish Films should yet make their presence felt, though their arrival be belated.

Brendan O'Shea.

ITALY

PRODUCES A FILM ON SAINT FRANCIS

The most notable film to be produced in Italy in 1950 will probably be Roberto Rossellini's *Life of Saint Francis of Assisi (Francesco giullare di Dio)*. The scenario has been written by Fellini in collaboration with the director and is based on the "Fioretti". The saint is seen from the time of his return from the hut at Rivotorto (after the audience granted to him by Innocent III) up to the day when he sets out to preach the Gospel throughout the world.

The part of Saint Francis is played by a real monk. Aldo Fabrizi, a young monk from Baronissi, has only a secondary role. The photography is being supervised by Martelli, while Virgilio Marchi will be responsible for the scenic arrangements.

The editing of the film constitutes something more than promising. Fellini and Rossellini seem to have struck just the right note, the note required for such an ambitious undertaking. The closing scene, which takes place in the snow, at the point where Francis and his companions are seeking their way, is full of spiritual significance.

— Which road do we take ?
— That willed by God, replies Francis.
— How are we to know God's will? ask the brothers.

At the command of Francis, they fall on their knees. Each finds the direction in which he is to go, even John. whose simpleness of soul leads him towards the birds hop, ping in the snow. Their long journey has started. Let u-hope that Rossellini's film will succeed in following them.

PORTUGUESE ACTIVITIES

Let us begin with a little history.

On June 29, 1936, Pius XI issued the encyclical "Vigilanti Cura", the Catholic *magna charta* on cinema questions.

On March 8, 1938, the Portuguese Central Group for Catholic Action, following the instructions of the Episcopate, set up the *Secretariado do Cinema e do Radio* as a national body. The papal directives were immediately put into operation: In Lisbon, an association of critics for the censorship of films from the Catholic standpoint was constituted, this censorship to be quite independent from the official censorship. At the same time, a great campaign for raising the moral standard of films was started by the Catholic press, the principal paper being the daily *Novidades*, and by radio, through the Portuguese Catholic programme «Radio-Renascença», which Monsignor Lopes da Cruz, director of the *Secretariado*, introduced and conducted in masterly fashion.

The censorship committee, a private section of the cinema and Radio Secretariat, has extended its activities to other cities in the country. With the help of its numerous organisations and sections, Catholic Action is studying how best to carry out the instructions of the directorate. The textbooks which guide the sections in their weekly meetings focus this problem in the minutest detail. Catholic organisations are taking up the question of the attendance of minors at public places of entertainment.

In 1939, the National Assembly approved, after prolonged debate, a bill regulating the admission of minors to cinemas and theatres. Unfortunately, in spite of the efforts of Catholics, the regulations have not yet been made public and the provisions of the bill have remained a dead letter. It is to be hoped that at the next Assembly somebody will succeed in overcoming, once and for all, the hesitation or indifference manifested for the last ten years regarding this matter.

The Cinema and Radio Secretariat will not relax its efforts until it has brought the movement to a successful conclusion.

As already stated, the Secretariat exercises a private censorship (when the film is first shown), but this must not be confused with the official or government censorship, which operates through the agency of the National Secretariat for Information, Folk Culture and Tourist Travel, a department directly responsible to the Presidency of the Council.

The Catholic Cinema and Radio Secretariat is not represented in the official censorship, though for some time past efforts have been made to secure for the Church — the highest moral authority in the world — the place it deserves on this committee. It is to be hoped that when the Catholic Secretariat is properly represented on the official censorship committee the cinema problem will, so far as we are concerned, and from the moral point of view be less acute than it is at present.

It is not Portuguese productions but particularly American, French and Italian films, which cause most moral difficulties.

Portuguese production is on a very limited scale and, in general, does not seriously offend Christian doctrine. In this respect, all honour is due to our best producers: Leitao de Barros, Lopes Ribeiro, Brun do Canto, Armando de Miranda, Artur Duarte, Perdigao Queiroga, Henrique de Campos and a few others.

Since the publication of our first article a year ago, the native films can be counted on the fingers.
They are :

a) Herois do Mar (Heroes of the Sea), by Fernando Garcia, inspired by the suffering and toiling of the seamen in the codfishing waters of Newfoundland.

b) A Morgadinha dos Canaviais (La demoiselle des Cannes), by an Italian engineer; an adaptation of a peasant novel of the same name by our author Julio Dinis.

c) Nao ha rapazes maus (There are no bad boys) in which Eduardo Maroto praises the admirable work of Father Américo, the Portuguese Flanagan.

d) Uma vida para dois (Life for two), an attempt by Armando de Miranda to introduce love drama to Portuguese production: the dramatic story of two young men in love with the same girl.

e) Sol e Touros (Sunshine and Bulls), by José Buchs, featuring the young Portuguese bull-fighter Manuel dos Santos; a film that *ran* for several months.

f) Ribatejo (The banks of the Tejo), produced by Henrique Campos, who filmed the characteristic banks of the Tejo to give an idea of the beautiful scenery and the hard life characteristic of the inhabitants.

g) A volta de José Telhado (The Return of José Telhado), another production by Armando de Miranda depicting the adventures of the notorious Portuguese highwayman who is said to have robbed travellers for the benefit of the poor.

Though some of these films pleased the public (especially *Sol e Touros*, *Nao ha rapazes maus* and *Ribatejo)*, none of them can be regarded as a masterpiece of Portuguese cinema.

A short while ago, Laitao de Barros' new film *Vendaval Maravilhoso*, was presented in Brazil, at Lisbon and Porto; it is the story of the Brazilian poet Castro Alves and his love for a Portuguese actress. The part of the actress is played by Amalia Rodrigues, the well-known Portuguese singer. The critics unanimously asserted that if national cinema wished to make headway it must not present such mediocre films in future. It is regrettable that *Vendaval Maravilhoso* bore the signature of Leitao de Barros (after he had given us works such as Camoens, Ines de Castro and so many other commendable productions).

As regards the morality of these films, no reservations of importance need be made; the first three and the last but one are quite acceptable from that point of view.

Nine films are being planned or in course of production, with the help of the National Cinema Fund, a newly founded organisation functioning as a department of the National Information Secretariat.

Armando Viera Pinto is working on *Eram duzentos Irmaos* (the were two hundred brothers), a film that will bring out the youthful and gay atmosphere that prevails in the Teacher Training School, and a comedy entitled *A cigarra e a formiga* (The Cricket and the Ant) illustrating the customs of Lisbon. Henrique de Campos is shortly to give us *Cantiga da Rua* (Street Songs). Antonio Lopes Ribeiro is designing a film on the life of Frai Luis de Souza, based on a dramatic novel by Almeida Garrett. Constan-

tino Esteves is working on the transcription of *O Comissario de Policia* (The Police Commissioner), Gervasio Lobato's famous comedy. Domingo de Mascarenhas, who earned distinction as a film critic, is to try his hand at producing a film based on a story by d'Eça de Queiros: *O defunto*. A similar experiment is being made by Raul Faria, another eminent critic, who has chosen a colonial subject: *A epopeia da selva* (Adventure in the Forest), in which he tells the heroic story of Silva Porto. The ever tireless Armando de Miranda is preparing a new film on bulls, while Gentil Marques is tackling a very delicate religious subject: *Milagro De Fatima* (The Miracle of Fatima).

It is to be hoped that some of these works will bring something new to the Portuguese film industry and mark a progress in technique.

Though few in number, these films suffice to show that Portuguese production is not standing idle, content to admire the procession of foreign films good or bad, succeeding one another on the screens of the country; it is not just squatting with folded arms like Buddha who, in that pose, found happiness.

As we have already said, it is the foreign films that give way to indecency, especially American, French and Italian films. Though a certain number of imported films are outstanding for their high moral value, there are a host of others which ought not to cross the frontier.

Among the former, one must recognise the success of *Sister Kenny, Good Sam, The Miracle of the Bells, The Snake Pit, Welcome Stranger* and, more recently, *Joan of Arc.*

In our previous article we spoke of the enthusiastic applause that greeted *Monsieur Vincent*, a film that does honour to French cinema from every point of view. France has furnished us with films that reveal the subtle art of her producers and the ability of her actors. *La Symphonie Pastorale, La Bataille du Rail, Destins, L'Aigle à Deux Têtes, Sortilèges, Etrange Destin*, etc. are notable examples. We must, however, admit that, from the moral standpoint, it can rarely be said that a French film does not require more or less serious modification.

The Italian films have conquered the Portuguese public. The success of *Rome, Open City* and *Un Jour dans la Vie* prepared us for what was to follow. *Fabiola* was appreciated though certain scenes of sensual heathenism compel us to make a few reservations. *La Porte du Ciel* is a good production, with a healthy realism that brings us nearer to God. *Nous les Vivants* and *Païsa* are technically very powerful productions but they display certain base characteristics which cause us great distress.

English, Spanish and Argentine films are to be seen in this country but they are relatively few in number. Portugal itself is represented still further down the scale. We cherish, or rather we wish to cherish, the hope that the institution of the National Cinema Fund will provide an incentive that will improve production, both as to quantity and quality.

V. Leal.

from "Radio-Renascença", Lisbonne

SPAIN

SPANISH CATHOLIC ACTION SETS UP AUXILIARY FILM BUREAU

The special interest which Catholic Action in Spain has always attached to the moral and educational problems presented by the cinema led to its decision to set up a Central Secretariat for Public Performances, taking as its terms of reference the lines laid down by the Holy See and the Spanish Hierarchy. This was only a preliminary stage which has none the less shown itself to be both useful and efficacious.

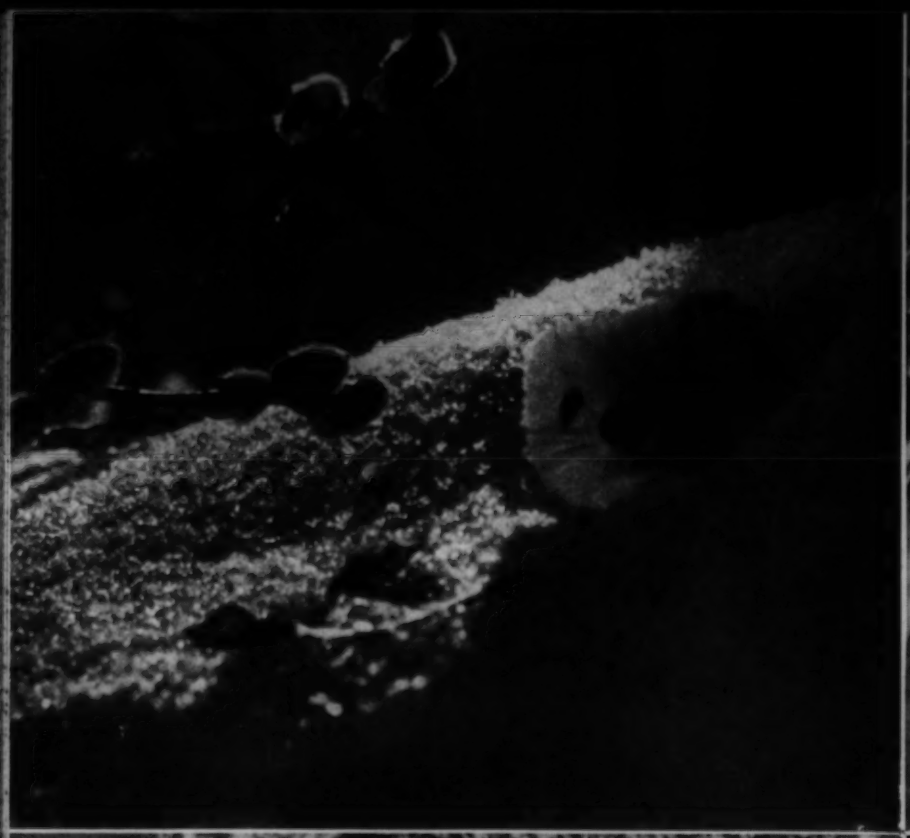
The next stage has been the organisation of an auxiliary film bureau whose primary object is the preparation of film programmes for school cinemas and for others who may not be able to do so for themselves.

This service enables headmasters and those responsible for parish organisations to obtain speedy and accurate information on technical problems, programme making and the value of films. For this purpose they need only indicate the type of audience for whom the film is required, the date of the show, and the amount it is wished to spend, to obtain very quickly and at the minimum cost all the information necessarv.

The bureau undertakes the hiring of films and obtains them at more favourable rates than if individuals approached the distributors direct.

The address of the bureau is: — Oficina auxiliar de cine, Cuesta de Santo Domingo, 5, Madrid.

On ne triche pas avec la vie (Doctor Louise), a French-Canadian film. Director: René Delacroix (1) with Madeleine Robinson (8) as Doctor Louise; Suzanne Avon (3), Paul Vandenberghe (5), Henri Poitras (5) and Jean Davy (7)



PRESENT STATE OF SWEDISH CINEMA

Certain persons, obsessed by classifications and final judgments, believe they can characterise vast sectors of world cinema by concise formulae expressed in apparently unassailable and precise terms. The mobility of the mind, however, is reflected in the works to which it gives birth; it would be displaying considerable temerity to claim that the film production of a given country can be exactly defined. In the case of Swedish cinema, a limited number of films seem to facilitate the work of classification undertaken by a critic; but it is impossible to discern any characteristics sufficiently precise to enable us to speak of the originality of a national cinema. In the following notes, it has therefore been deemed preferable to abstain from elaborating a hard and fast definition and to endeavour to determine the real tendencies.

Themes and inspiration

THEMES AND INSPIRATION

As a result of the somewhat peculiar economic conditions ruling in Sweden, to which subject we shall return later, forty or so long films are, year in year out, produced in the country. As in all other countries, the percentage of commercial reels (and mediocre at that) is high. This category includes practically all comic films so dear to the local population, but in which comedy is displayed with such vulgarity, associated with childishness often synonymous with sheer nonsense, that these films are tolerated only with difficulty by a western audience. Farm-house farces, sketches interspersed with songs and military burlesques are played with distressing regularity by the two national comedians, Nils Poppe and Edvard Persson.

As for the films that present some measure of interest, these at present gravitate around two poles at which the themes that inspire Swedish cineasts may be said to crystallise: mysticism and realism, lined respectively with a taste for the fantastic and the erotic.

The first of these poles subsists thanks to an extension of the past. It will be remembered that Swedish cinema reached its zenith with the silent films of Victor Sjöström [1]) and Maurice Stiller (1888—1927), two artists who succeeded in creating a really national and widespread cinema by drawing their themes from the vast expanse of luminous landscapes suddenly disturbed by bitter, powerful, fantastic and mystic dramas. There is a tendency for this glorious past to be reflected in the present; the young cineasts of today have inherited a taste for certain themes that cannot be separated from the soul of Sweden. But let there be no misunderstanding on this point: the films that spring from mystical, or simply religious, preoccupations; those inspired by legends, in which the supernatural is mixed with candid and stirring poetry, are becoming increasingly scarce. No doubt, an unbroken stream still runs from Sjöström and Stiller to the cineasts of the present day, but it is growing steadily weaker. Slowly but surely, it is being submerged by one from another source, to which a new virtue called "realism" has been attributed.

At the fountain-head of this new stream there is the influence exerted by certain French films, those of Renoir, Feyder and, in particular, Carné. The atmosphere pervading *Quai des Brumes* or *Hôtel du Nord* made a strong impression on young people already haunted by memories of the spell-binding subtlety they sensed in the national films of the glorious years. It should be pointed out that the quest for atmosphere today constitutes one of the most striking features of Swedish films. Created, often laboriously, by a fusion of reminiscence and foreign influence, it has now been almost completely detached from the supernatural and fantastic factor so dear to Swedish cineasts of the silent film. What exactly is there hidden by this atmosphere in which the striving after truth of detail predominates? Ethical and, above all, social themes for which the rising generation shows such a passionate fondness — those young persons who, as one of them wrote, are "disgusted with everything: with their predecessors, with materialism, with the times, capitalism, God and the devil — even with themselves". That is plain speaking, and after such a profession of faith it seems that one must expect to see an avalanche of powerful films whose rekindling breath will be the guarantee of what may perhaps be a dangerous, but nonetheless real, inspiration. We can imagine these young persons in their thousands, bubbling over with enthusiasm, storming the studios, banishing the "sordid materialism of producers" and, fired by a sacred frenzy, making interesting, if not very fine, films . . .

But exactly the contrary is happening.

SUBSTANCE AND FORM

At first sight, Swedish films seem to be designed with the intention of giving them a valid meaning. This fact may come as a pleasant surprise at a time when it is particularly the gratuitousness of films that one deplores. Actually, however, — and this is where the shoe pinches — there is a wide gulf between realisation and intention. As stated above, many Swedish films deal with social problems concerning the general com-

[1]) Sjöström produced his last film in 1931; he is now content to continue his career as an actor.

1. *The Divided World* by Arre Sucksdorff
2. *Shadows on the snow*, by Arne Sucksdorff
3. Eva Dahlbeck and Max von Sydow in *Bara en Mor*
4. A scene in *Hets*, by Alf Sjöberg
5. *Summer legend*, by Arne Sucksdorff
6. Ingmar Bergman (left) and his operateur Göran Strindberg taking views for *Fängelse* (Terra)

munity. The manner in which this course has been systematically followed is particularly interesting in a country that has progressed so far socially and where the standard of living is higher than anywhere else in Europe, Switzerland excepted. But the way in which certain "claims" are expressed is still more confusing.

To take an example, *Gatan (La Rue)* by Gösta Werner, can in many respects be regarded as representing perfectly contemporary Swedish cinema. It was obviously the author's intention to show how misfortune and want can drive respectable girls to material as well as moral destitution, and in an effort to combine a portrayal of social conditions with individual psychology he made use of the psychological inferences offered by his subject.

It is easy to imagine what the realism of the Italian school might have produced from such basic material: a warm, human and vibrating film. The Swede — a reserved and intellectual person was content to handle his subject superficially; though the situations were dramatic, they awakened no deep-seated echo in our heart. What social interest the theme may have had is weakened in its appeal by a re-edition of the myth about women of easy virtue exploited in films from every possible angle. As for the psychological factor, it transgresses accepted concepts by an excess of schematisation; viewed in this light, the film resembles a marionette play in which the characters are made ostentatiously to impersonate feelings in the crude state, to the exclusion of any subduing nuance. In short — and here the study of these specific cases permits a legitimate extrapolation applicable to most Swedish films of this class — the film is an artificial structure; the spectator cannot believe in the human reality of the characters. The cinema-photograph has collected the facts just as they present themselves but it fails to get beyond them.

These constants are to be found in other Swedish films of the "realist" type. There is, in every case, the endeavour to create a more or less dense atmosphere by bringing into action the entire cinematographic arsenal of violence and sensuality. This latter element is very much in favour, with spectators as well as with film directors, but the naïve ostentation with which it is thrust upon the public very largely mitigates its pernicious character. It is nothing more than a commercial "stunt" tolerated by the censors and appreciated by the public. We would not, for all that, go so far as to say that this kind of film is immoral; the so-called risqué scenes have no connection with any form of philosophical concept; they are the consequence of the commanding authority of the producers. For since these producers enjoy practically total freedom in this field, they never fail to pander to the baser instincts of the people.

As for atmosphere, the most serious criticism that can be made is that it is uncalled for and vacuous. In former days, the great Swedish directors knew how to scrutinise life through their essentially personal "prisms" and so brought out its meaning, revealed its beauty and gave it a measure of human or aesthetic significance. To-day, more often than not, cineasts are incapable of endowing their work with the richness of expression: they remain tied down to the anecdote without knowing how to transfigure it.

In spite of the constantly more pronounced predominance of realism, all links with the cinematographic past of the country have not yet been severed. It is gratifying to note that the effusively enthusiastic young man whose remarks appear above, Rune Lindström, is precisely the author of the scenario of the best film in which the old mystical tradition is maintained. *The Road to Heaven* is a success and undoubtedly a good film. By imagining their characters (God, Satan, Solomon . . .) in a familiar and simple form, the authors (Alf Sjöberg was the director) presented a profound religious reality as something tangible. The fine scenes in this work are imbued with grave naiveness, admirably in keeping with the meaning to be deduced from the story. We witness a strange mixture of spontaneous faith and mystical meditation expressed in a style that invariably rings true, so that the miracle of communion between artist and spectator is accomplished — what the artist sees is understood and admired by the spectator.

The Road to Heaven has qualities that are both spiritual and artistic. The film is, however, an isolated success. In *La Parole,* the result of a Rune Lindström and Gustaf Molander partnership, the authors no longer found the appropriate style. By attempting to give a daily and "realist" setting to a grave religious conflict they produced a hybrid film that fails to move us. Is it because they forgot that the artist can only reach the spectator's heart by radiating his own emotions?

Hampe Faustman's *The Devil and the Servant* is even lower down the scale. The supernatural cannot impose itself on our mind unless it is surrounded by a minimum of poetry; despite laborious efforts to introduce a modicum of poetry, it is entirely lacking in the film. The story (Satan vanquished by love) is developed so ponderously that it would be useless to speak at greater length of a film totally devoid of meaning.

ANAEMIA OF SWEDISH CINEMA

The main feature of the long films produced in Sweden today is that substance is divorced from form. And yet the film technique of Swedish cineasts is just as good as that of their colleagues in other countries. Photography, in particular, is often of a high standard; suggestion relies almost exclusively on the make-up of the pictures. (Editing and montage are less convincing and there is frequently a tendency towards excessive omission and a certain awkardness in the development of the story.) The majority of Swedish films, however, are lacking both in breath and breadth. Should we say that this state of affairs is due essentially to the personality of the directors or, to be more precise, to their lack of personality?

As a rule, Swedish cineasts come from the legitimate stage. For them, film-making is a complementary occupation. The "theatre style", strange to say, is less discernible, however, than might rightly be feared. This at least denotes a capacity for assimilating the specific requirements of the screen — a capacity that is not to be found in a fair number of other theatrical men who suddenly become cineasts. Nevertheless — and here we touch upon the essential point — these men carry out their work properly, but without ardour or inspiration. The gift for transposition and, lastly, for poetry, is lacking: their creative contribution is generally insignificant. From time to time, of course, a film does distinguish itself by its outstanding qualities, for example: Alf Sjöberg's *Hets,* in which serious efforts in the matter of visual analysis can be noted. The films, on the whole, however, remain dull and anæmic. The statements expressed by the most fiery young men "disgusted with everything" cannot in any way remedy this scarcity of personalities.

We are tempted to ask ourselves whether Swedish film production is not embedded in the quicksands of inertia, from which felicitous accidents alone are likely to extricate them. In any case, Sweden can pride herself on possessing at least one cineast, a true cineast, with the soul of a poet: Arne Sucksdorff.

ARNE SUCKSDORFF

Is it not significant that the most reliable and most valuable asset of Swedish cinema should be this gentle and quiet man who, in no way, aspires to changing the world? He does not indulge in the proclamation of manifestoes, neither does he resort to erotic or melodramatic patterns: he is content to contemplate mankind and animals, to study universal and sovereign Nature. He observes, transposes and assembles his materials according to the dictates of his own insight. A man, a personality and an artist.

It would be incorrect to say that Arne Sucksdorff's films are documentaries. Instead of this term, which singularly restrains the creative purport of a film, let us call them "shorts". Sucksdorff is undoubtedly a creator; his films reveal those constants of thought which allow us to regard them as so many complementary aspects revolving around one and the same central theme. This theme — the conductor wire, so to speak — dissected and productive, embraces in a broad spirit of pantheism the whole of the sensitive world, in its most complete and most significant manifestations. Sucksdorff possesses that gift of all true poets which permits us to approach the inexpressible. The pictures of icicles on a branch which melt away to release the first shoots; an animal devouring its prey, become symbols of the world, of our world, whose movement shapes our destiny. Throughout Sucksdorff's films there flows a broad lyricism, grave, tender and exalting. It discloses the very nucleus of a living essence, that nucleus in which congregate the elements of our existence: beauty and ugliness, peace and war, life and death. All these themes, embodied in one and the same reality, are to be found in Sucksdorff's works, and they each take up their place in a great symphony, whose wealth of melodious counterpoint carries us into the realms of ecstasy. The careless laughter of a child mingles with the warning moan of an ambulance siren *(City Rhythm);* the tranquillity of the forest is disturbed by mortal combats *(The World Divided, Shadows on the Snow),* but the dominant note in this duality of atmosphere is one of grandiose and awe-inspiring beauty. For, however great Natural tragedy may be, there is always a means of finding the path leading to appeasement and purity. Seeking for what is beautiful fascinates Sucksdorff and promises us some remarkable discoveries.

Arne Sucksdorff is not only an artist; he also has that valuable gift of expressing himself in a very pure cinema language. His carefully composed pictures are merely bases, starting points which allow the spectator to get nearer to what is better left unsaid. Sucksdorff knows the value of suggestion. The montage of his films, very much like the scoring of "music that can be seen", helps to communicate to the spectator the emotions of a compassionate and sensitive mind.

Quite recently, Sucksdorff was awarded an "Oscar" in America for his *City Rhythm (Rythme de la Ville);* we have rarely had an opportunity of endorsing the choice made by American assessors with such deep satisfaction.

INGMAR BERGMAN

Next to Arne Sucksdorff, whose reputation is now world-wide, we should not forget Ingmar Bergman, a young cineast gifted with a fertile, intelligent and cultured imagination who seems capable of raising the production of his country to an interesting level.

Bergman, a parson's son, has so far distinguished himself as a stage manager, a profession in which his personal and bold ideas announced genuine talent. On several occasions he has tried his hand at film-making, either as a scenarist *(Hets)* or as a director *(Port of Lost Women,* a laborious and insignificant melodrama). He has just produced a film which is probably the best long film presented by Sweden in recent years.

Considered superficially, *Fängelse (Prison)* seems to be a new version of the tragedy of the good girl who is driven to prostitution by unfortunate circumstances and the brutality of condoning parents, the background being the twofold theme: love the purifier and maternal love. But beneath this conventional surface, the film carries a specific significance. The theme is certainly a debatable one: imprisonment, the life from which there is no escape possible, except through faith or self-destruction. Bergman envisages these two possibilities, first from the methaphysical standpoint, then from the human point of view. Faithful to the precepts

of the so-called realist school, the author complaisantly dwells at length on the moral blackness of his characters. His style is vigorous and incisive, though occasionally overloaded with surrealist reminiscences and facile symbolism. Whatever reservations may be formulated regarding the subject, however, it cannot be denied that Bergman's characters are far removed from the conventional puppets that we are accustomed to seeing in Swedish films: his characters are alive. It therefore seems certain that *Fängelse,* a severe and violent film, heralds the advent of a dangerous personality perhaps, but one whose work will put new life into Swedish cinema.

The latest Swedish films do not invalidate our conclusions. The "realist" virus continues to contaminate the country's production. The talent and personality of an Ingmar Bergman seem to get lost in an atmosphere of foolish bias. His *Hamnstad (Sea-port)* is claimed to be a poem of fatalism and despair, but in spite of the intermittent interest it awakens and a certain sensing of human realities, the film is a poem devoid of poetry, gracefulness and import. In *Törst (Thirst),* Bergman proclaims his partiality for the sordid with such ostentation as to make it ridiculous: the main spings of this murky and would-be psychological story are: abortion, suicide, murder, love und questionable behaviour. They are all linked up together so systematically and gratuitously that the spectator ends by smiling at such a naive display of sadism. Need we add that it would be impossible to discern even a beginning of meaning in this film?

Though Swedish cinema remains in a dormant state, there are indications to show that "popular" realism à la suédoise is an artistic failure. Certain cineasts are thinking of replacing the systematic quest for the sordid by a new school of thought calculated to restore contact with specifically national traditions. It is surely not to the veteran Gustaf Molander that we owe this incitement to rejuvenescence. He has just put his signature to a distressing and insipid comedy: *Kärleken Segrar (Love the Victor).* Alf Sjöberg, on the other hand, has made a rather remarkable film: *Bara en Mor (Only a mother),* a story of motherly love built around peasant customs. The author here proves his exquisite sensitiveness and his thorough understanding of the cinema style. Ivar Johanssons' novel contained all the pitfalls of a sentimental melodrama, but while proving a commendable concern in the matter of transposition, Sjöberg succeeded in striking the emotional note by his simplicity and restraint — a clear example of talent that goes farther than clever technique.

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

How can a small country maintain a remunerative film industry? The answer to this question is given in the four following points:

1) Compared with the figures for other countries, the cost price of Swedish films is generally low. Producers are systematically pursuing a policy of budgetary restrictions which occasionally leads to economy of so drastic a nature that the making of films is bound to suffer. This state of affairs helps to explain the regrettable banality and excessive conventionalism of a large number of Swedish films, many of which are similar: producers have a tendency to make the public accept standardised and time-tested subjects.

2) There is a potential demand for national films in the country; the financial return on these films is accordingly assured at the outset. This is due to a peculiarity regarding language: since the dubbing of foreign films is unknown in Sweden, the public, though appreciative of American films, prefers to hear actors speaking in the national tongue.

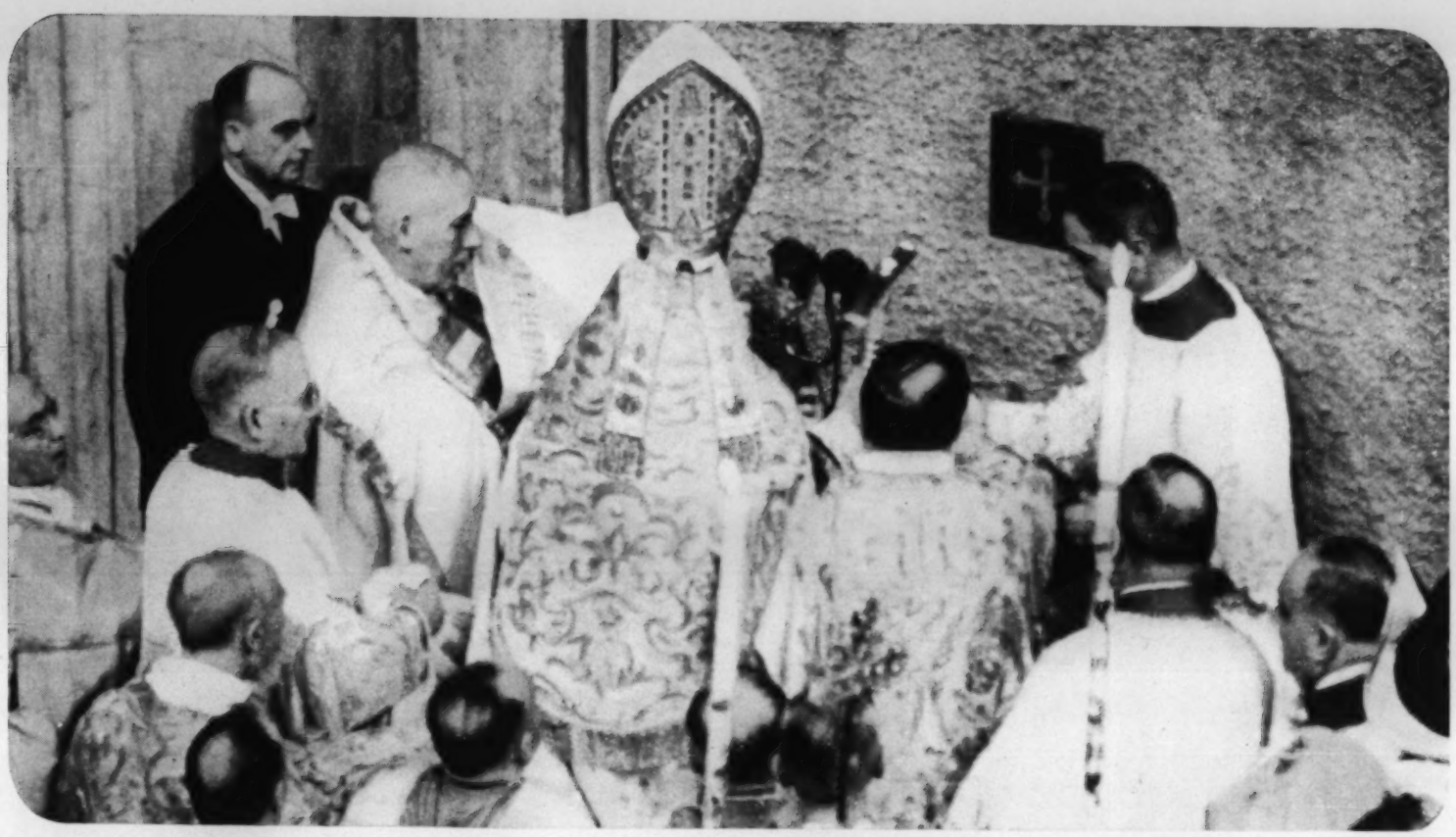
3) Film-producers own large picture-house circuits; by distributing and exploiting their own films, they substantially increase their margin of profit.

Production, which is very much centralised, is in the hands of a few big concerns; among the leading firms may be mentioned the thirty-year-old Svensk Filmindustri, which formerly produced the principal silent films. This firm turns out about ten long films a year, besides a number of shorts (those by Sucksdorff, for example), school films, etc.

The Terra, another front-rank concern, deals exclusively with the production of films. It was this firm which engaged Christian-Jaque for the making of a sort of Scandinavian superproduction: *Singoalla,* in three versions (French, English and Swedish). The stars were Viveca Lindfors and Michel Auclair.

To sum up, and allowing for the above exceptions, Swedish production today strikes one as being artistically poor and lacking in spiritual quality. None but men of high standing will be able to instil new vitality into Swedish cinema. With such a renewal of life, the future could be made worthy of the past.

Alfred Adler



O. C. I. C. NEWS ITEMS

1. ROME - His Holiness Pope Pius XII solemnly inaugurates the Holy Year, a year of hope for men of good will.
2. BOSTON - 80 000 young people march through the city under the auspices of the Catholic Youth Organisation and led by His Eminence Cushing, Archbishop of Boston. The manifestation was filmed in colour (16mm) for *Youth on Parade* (600 m.)
3. VATICAN CITY - The camera invades the Vatican. *The Nile* is being considered for Guido Manera's colour film *Vaticano*. Director : Giuliano Tomei. Pictures by Cyril J. Knowles.
4. LUXEMBOURG - The Rev. John A. V. Burke hands to Charles French the diploma of honour awarded by O.C.I.C. for his film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1949)

From this balcony, His Holiness Pope Pius XII bestows his blessing urbi et orbi *on four hundred and twenty-five million Catholics. The people of Rome and pilgrims from all parts of the world kneel before him on the piazza surrounded by Bernini's elliptical colonnade, thronging the Via della Conciliazione as far as the Castello Sant' Angelo. No other art could vie with the cinema in recording this indescribable scene.*

A FILM INTENDED TO CONTRIBUTE TO CHRISTIAN UNITY:

«VATICAN»[1]

A unique enterprise has recently been completed in the form of a four-reel technicolour film made in the Vatican by a unit comprising both Catholics and Protestants. Every necessary permission was given to enable the technicians to achieve a first-class job — and the Holy Father himself graciously took part in the film and gave a special blessing to it and to the non-Catholics helping to make it.

As the Holy Father has expressly invited non-Catholic Christians to come to Rome during the Holy Year as a gesture towards Christian unity, this film may well prove to be a very important instrument to that end. Hans Nieter, the producer and moving force behind the film, is a well known cineast and is a man of deep religious convictions. He has paid us the great compliment of seeking our co-operation from the outset of the film and though he is not a Catholic he has expressed the strongest desire that his film should be acceptable and accurate from our point of view.

Having talked with him about his ideas and ideals with regard to his film VATICAN, it seemed to us that we should ask him to write down something for the International Film Review. This he has done and if some of our Catholic readers find that there is an unaccustomed sound to some of the phrases, they will remember that it is a Protestant who writes: one who has the greatest respect for the Catholic Church but one who still speaks as the convinced Lutheran he is. It is a gratifying thing to come across men of any Christian denomination who recognise, with us, the power of the cinema and their responsibility in using it.

J. A. V. B.

The making of any documentary film has two aspects:

(a) the purely technical side — how to obtain what is in the script with the many lateral issues arising such as lighting, special facilities and so forth;

(b) the impact of the actual subject on the mind.

The Vatican film (which runs for 45 minutes) was made in association with an Italian documentary unit, Phoenix Films of Rome, and ourselves, the Seven-League Film Unit which provided 80% of the technicians. Although I have made a number of Technicolour films, some in Italy including one of Rome, the Vatican film was my biggest assignment and was in addition the first technicolour film ever made there. To the Technicolour crew the problems were enormous. Technicolour demands blue light from arc lamps and Italian studios are not equipped for this type of lighting. It was only with the help of Mole-Richardson, the Italian branch of the British firm, and their manager Mr. Jarrett through whose enthusiasm we were able to get round our difficulties. At times we had up to nine generators running at once in the courtyards of the Vatican — (referred to by one of the Cardinals as "those infernal machines") — and we sometimes looked at one another in dismay at the noise which we caused in the otherwise so tranquil and scholastic atmosphere of the Vatican City. The Vatican power station produces current up to approximately 500 amperes but at the time that we were working the whole of this was needed for heating the museum and the interior of St. Peter's. We needed up to 4000 amperes adequately to light the vast interiors of the Sala Clementina, the Sala Ducale, the Sala Regio and the Basilica itself. Owing to the vastness of the buildings and the number of generators we sometimes had as much as two miles of cables. Our production manager bought rolls of cheap wall paper so that the cables should not soil the beautiful marble and mosaic floors.

Having previously seen only news reel and 16mm. film units the Vatican authorities were amazed at the paraphernalia and apparatus necessary for a first class Technicolour production. However, once they saw we were really serious they were very helpful and only insisted that one of their art experts should be always with us to test the temperature and make sure that the frescoes and paintings and tapestries were not damaged by excessive heat. If the temperature rose above 30 degrees centigrade all the lights had to be put out to let the atmosphere cool off again. We ourselves were afraid to shoot in the rooms where they had some of their most priceless tapestries and asked to have them exchanged for others less valuable, as we did not know what the effect of arc lighting would be on the colours, and thought that they might fade.

In modern documentary films actors are often used, but in this film we were particularly anxious that all the people appearing should be real people. In a film with such a religious aspect, with His Holiness appearing personally, we thought it would not be right for any part to be acted. For instance, such scenes as conferences with Cardinals and high dignitaries took a long time to arrange because we sometimes had to wait until an actual conference took place.

This brings me to the impact of the subject matter on the technicians. It has been my experience in the making of all films that it is most important to choose technicians who are in sympathy with the subject matter. For example, in the case of medical films of which I have made many, I make sure that the members of the unit are (*a*) interested in medicine in general and (*b*) can stand the sight of blood. In the case of the Vatican film only one member of the British unit, the lighting cameraman Cyril J. Knowles, was a Catholic — all the rest were Protestants — but I made sure that they were interested in a Christian film and had the necessary respect and tolerance for this particular film.

[1]) produced and realised by Hans Nieter O'Leary.

For a director and producer it would be intolerable to have to work with people who took the matter superciliously or even lightly. So all the Protestants working on this film, whatever they were, Church of England, Nonconformist or Lutheran, were in full sympathy and even enthusiastic about the subject. There were many aspects that were strange to us — (though nothing so strange as for example when we made films in India and the Middle East about Hinduism and Islam) — for in Rome we found many points of common understanding. We were seeing another aspect of Christianity, but it embodied our God and the teachings of Christ and therefore we felt at home and we appreciated the tolerance and generosity shown towards us.

During one of my many meetings with those in charge of different parts of the Vatican, I was told by a Monsignor that the Catholics consider themselves as caretakers of the Holy Places in their custody for all the Christian Churches, for were we not once united? And even if we have become disunited are we not still brothers? "For although I believe in Catholicism and you, Nieter, are a Lutheran, only God knows what is truth". I shall never forget this generosity and tolerance of thought and my heart went out to him.

Also, I had the great honour of a private audience with the Holy Father, together with members of my unit, where I reported the progress of the film and told His Holiness that for us Protestants the Vatican represents to-day a bastion standing for the freedom of worship, and the film will therefore be important not only for Roman Catholics all over the world, but for Protestants too. He turned to me and said "But of course, my son, I am always here for you Protestants whenever you want me".

In the production of this film it was a great experience to work in such an atmosphere of tolerance and harmony, and I hope that it can be repeated in the making of other films which are specifically neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant in outlook, but express the ethics of both, in fact are Christian.

HANS NIETER.

A formula for the photographic picture of the cinema: Solem quis dicere falsum audeat?
(Who would dare to say the sun is false?)

«The International Catholic Film Office gives its full support to the making of THE DIVINE TRAGEDY in the hope of assisting to make of it the masterpiece which the world so badly needs.»

JEAN BERNARD,
President, Int. Cath. Film Office,
BRUSSELS.

«Even if there were in the whole work only the episcodes of the Sermon on the Mount and the Our Father, I should still hail the author of such a film as a benefactor of humanity.»
Your suggestion of a fourth dimension, which makes possible the simultaneous presentation of the historical Christ and the «Christ within us», is an idea which has come to you as a grace from Heaven. I assure you that that grace, although given you, will be placed to your credit just the same. That is God's way.»

SERTILLANGES.

«I believe that this film will have a tremendous effect on those who see it. This is the first time that the cinema has become the means of expressing a truly liturgical work and has created that atmosphere of holy dread which is excited by the creation of the mystical world.»

JEAN DANIELOU,
Director «Etudes.»

LA DIVINE TRAGEDIE

THE FILM FOR THE HOLY YEAR

In our day and age, when sadness and misery spread a heavy cloud over the earth, it is more than ever necessary that the Fiery Cross of the Passion should be raised in dazzling splendour over the ruins that man's hate has multiplied, and that it should bring to every suffering and wandering soul that matchless balm of Galaad which alone can heal and transfigure.

In all of the following countries, tens of thousands of people, by helping to finance THE DIVINE TRAGEDY, have added their stone to this «cathedral of light and sound»:

Belgium - Brazil - France - Great Britain - India - Israel
Italy - Luxembourg - Portugal - Spain - Switzerland
Tangier - United States

All communications to S.I.C.A.F.,
21, boulevard Montmartre, Paris (2e)

1900 1950

Fifty years'

uninterrupted activity have made

GAUMONT

the leading

French cinematograph company

ULTRA-MODERN

DISTRIBUTION

SERVICE ORGANISATION

THE BEST FILMS

OPERATION

THE FINEST PICTURE HOUSES

THE BEST FILMS

3, RUE CAULAINCOURT

MARCADET 56-00

I N T E R N A T I O N A L F O R W A R D S

MASSCE-BARNETT CO., INC.

723 SEVENTH AVENUE — NEW YORK 19 N. Y

ESTABLISHED 1887

INTERNATIONAL FREIGHT FORWARDERS
CUSTOMS BROKERS • AIR EXPRESS

COMPLETE EXPORT PACKING AND WAREHOUSING FACILITIES

Hollywood, California Offices
6364 Santa Monica Boulevard

SPECIALISTS FOR MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

LATE ETABLISSEMENTS DEBLON & Co

LTD.

CUSTOMS AGENTS AND INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS
FOR THE CINEMATOGRAPHIC INDUSTRY

*

TRAVEL TICKETS, RESERVATIONS AND FACILITIES
FOR TRAVELLING FILM COMPANIES

*

13, BOULEVARD BAUDOUIN — BRUSSELS — TEL.: 17-77 AND 21-22

TRANSPORTS R. MICHAUX & Cº

Ltd.

2, RUE DE ROCROY

PARIS

TEL.: TRU: 72-81 7 LINES

International transport service — — Customs agents — — Specialists in cinematography (films, equipment, etc.) — Correspondents all over the world —

Approved B. I. F. A. P. — Freight all air lines for personnel and materiel of travelling film companies (all destinations) — — — — — —

SOCIÉTÉ A RESPONSABILITÉ LIMITÉE AU CAPITAL DE 1.000.000

✱

2, RUE DU 4 SEPTEMBRE - **PARIS**

FRANCE

Acaba de aparecer

UN LIBRO INDISPENSABLE

para los militantes de un Cine mejor

"ORIENTACIONES INTERNACIONALES DEL CINEMA"

(Edición castellana de "Les Catholiques parlent du Cinéma")

IV Congreso Internacional del Cine católico

1 vol., 430 páginas : 40 pesetas

Publicación de "Cuadernos de Monografias", Nr. 13

Seminario de problemas hispanoamericanos
Marques del Riscal, 3 - MADRID

ATOMIC PHYSICS-

the authoritative film on the history and development of Atomic Energy, made by

G-B INSTRUCTIONAL LTD.

Part 1. The Atomic Theory. *Early experiments in Electrolysis.*

Part 2. Rays from Atoms. *Discovery of the Electron,*

Part 3. The Nuclear Structure of the Atom.

Part 4. Atom Smashing. *The Discovery of the Neutron.*

Part 5. Uranium Fission. *Atomic Energy.*

The Film is designed for use in the Science Departments of Universities, Technical Colleges and institutions of similar standing and of such schools as take fairly advanced physics. Part 1 is, however, suitable for science pupils of fifteen plus. The five parts are so designed that each can be used independently.

All concerned with the teaching of science are invited to write for the descriptive leaflet and details of hire or purchase to

G. B. FILM LIBRARY, AINTREE ROAD, PERIVALE, GREENFORD, MIDDLESEX

SUBSCRIBE TO THE

RENCONTRES

CINÉMATOGRAPHIQUES

which will keep you informed about the Italian and French film world

Subscription rates :

France : ..... 1.000 frs
Abroad : ..... 1.500 frs

Central editorial office and administration : 6, Bld. Poissonnière, PARIS, 9e

CONTRIBUTORS : Michel FOURRÉ-CORMERAY - Nicola DE PIRRO - Jean George AURIOL - LO DUCA - Jean VIVIÉ - Luchino VISCONTI - Viviane ROMANCE - Jean GRÉMILLION - Guido ARISTARCO - Mario VERDONE - Alexandre ARNOUX - Jean CLÉMENT - Glauco VIAZZI - Alessandro BLASETTI - Marcello PAGLIERO - Marcel ESCOFFIER - Lea PADOVANI - Umberto BARBARO - Jean GENET - Jean NÉRY - Robert PILATI - Pierre ROBIN - Véra VOLMANE - JEANDER - G. CHARENSOL - AURIANT - Jacques NATTEAU - G. GARANCINI - etc.

Vient de paraître

INDEX

DE LA CINÉMATOGRAPHIE FRANÇAISE

1949-1950

TROISIÈME ANNÉE

ANALYSE CRITIQUE COMPLETE DE
TOUS LES FILMS
EDITION ANNUELLE

Un volume de 630 pages illustré
France et Outre-mer 920 Fr.
Étranger 1.000 Fr.
PORT COMPRIS

DANS TOUTES LES BONNES LIBRAIRIES

ou contre envoi CHÈQUE POSTAL 706-90 PARIS à

LA CINÉMATOGRAPHIE FRANÇAISE
29, Rue Marsoulan - PARIS (12e) Tél. : DIDerot 85-35

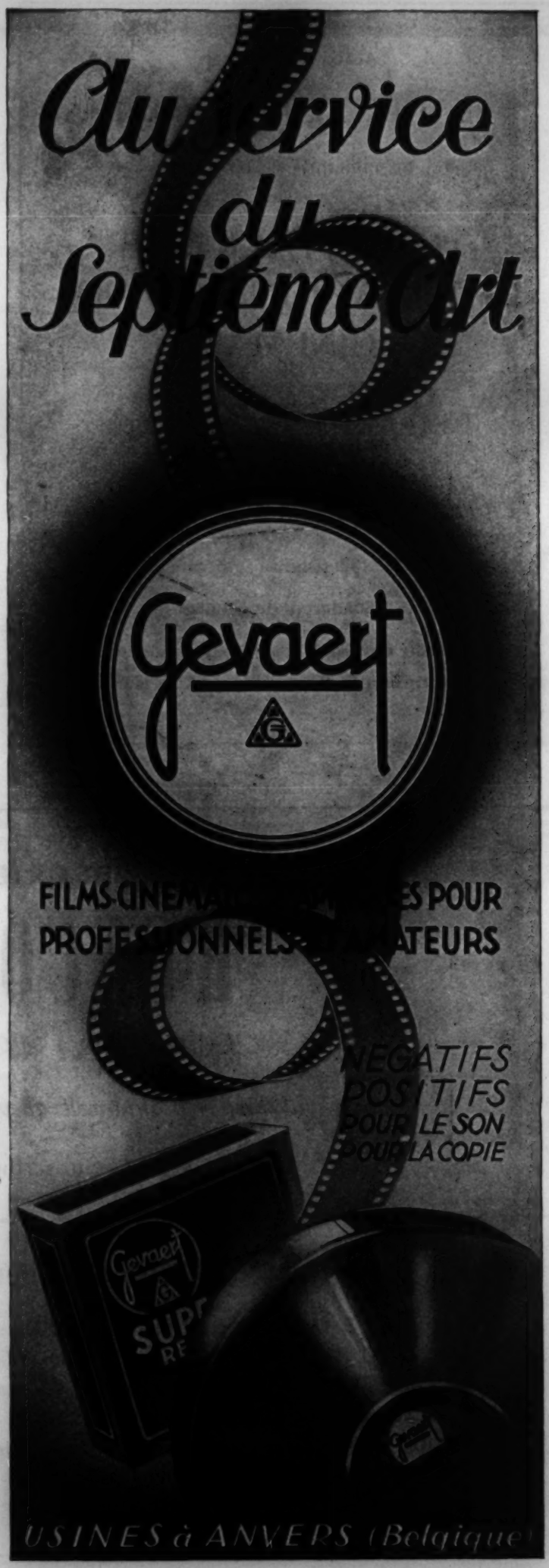
Quality Printing

IN ANY LANGUAGE
WITH RECORD SPEED

IMPRIMERIE

ST.-PAUL S. A.

RUE JEAN ORIGER 6-8 - **LUXEMBOURG**



THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS & SCIENCES

Grants an AWARD to

André Coutant and Jacques Mathot

for their **CAMEFLEX** ("Camérette" in U.S.A.)

with the mention:

The "Camérette" fulfils the need for a hand-held motorized precision camera which supplements studio-type cameras

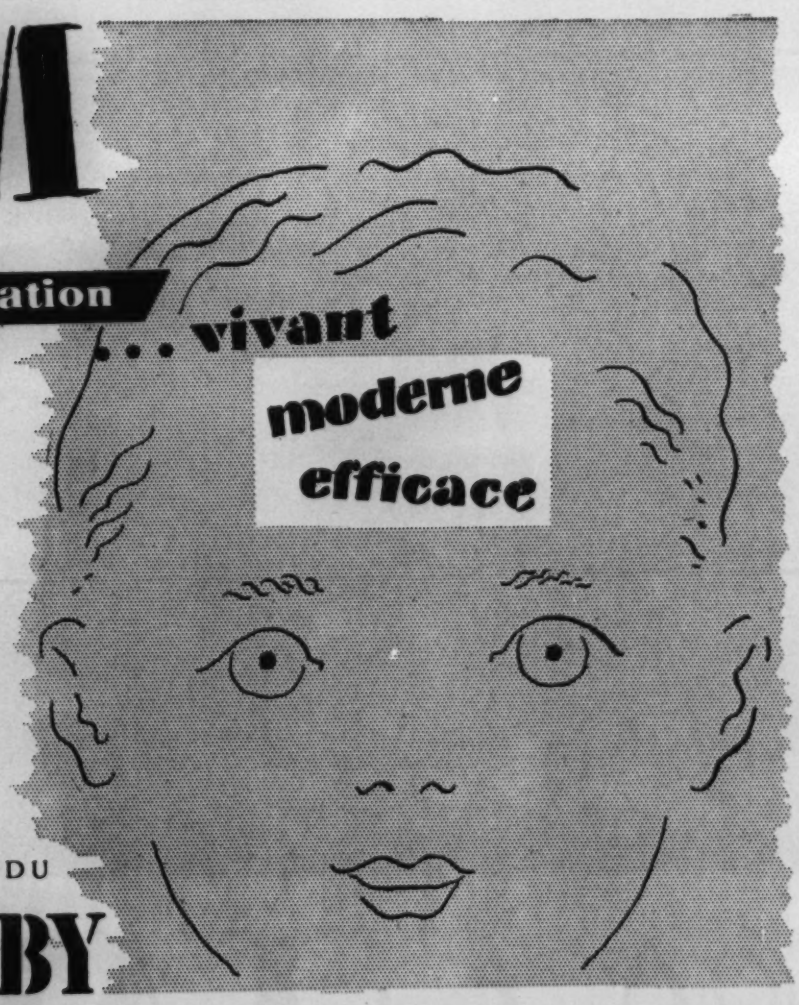
HOLLYWOOD

March 23rd. 1950

ECLAIR Manufacturers PARIS

LE FILM

peut être un moyen d'éducation

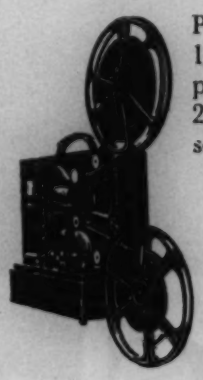


PATHÉ BABY. New teaching resources thanks to the cinema : educational and attractive sittings strike the imagination and improve the memory.

●

PATHÉ puts at your disposal all categories of films, silent and sound.

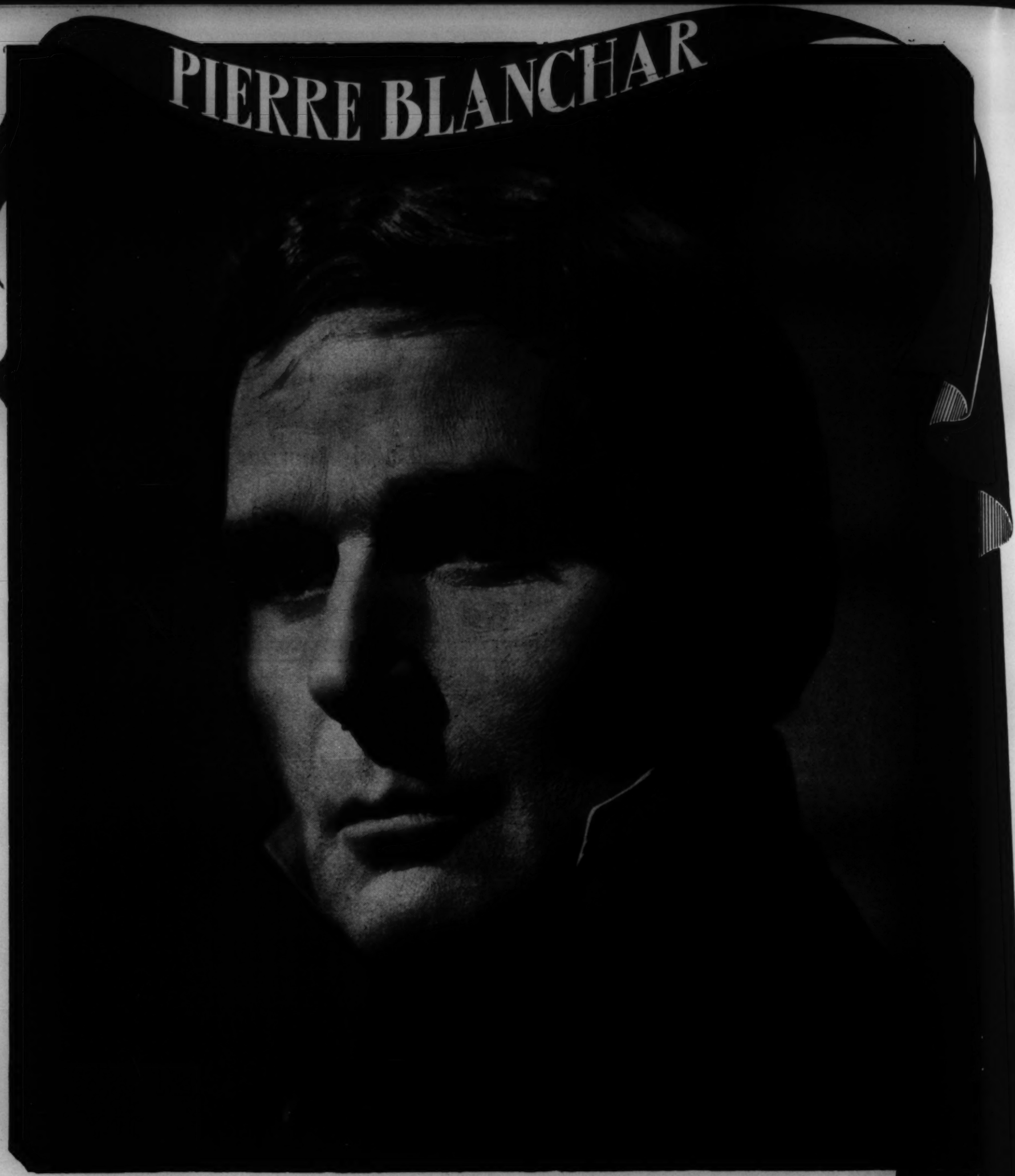
●



Pathé-Joinville Projector (9 mm5 or 16 mm) ; offered in travelling box; perfect luminosity ; 750 watts ; loads 250 m reel ; can be completed with sound equipment.

SOCIÉTÉ FRANÇAISE DU

PATHÉ-BABY



Docteur LAENNEC

A MAURICE CLOCHE FILM

Distribution and sale abroad: Interfrance Films 25, Rue Quentin-Bauchart Paris 8e

Tel.: ELY. 75-53 and 80-21

THE HOLY YEAR

will be marked by

THE ADVENT OF TWO NEW
FRENCH MAJOR PRODUCTIONS

LE JOURNAL D'UN CURE DE CAMPAGNE

(THE DIARY OF A COUNTRY PRIEST)

FROM THE BOOK BY
GEORGES BERNANOS

A
ROBERT BRESSON
FILM

PRODUCERS:
Les Films modernes
U. G. C.

DISTRIBUTORS:
A. G. D. C.

✸

THREE TELEGRAMS

ORIGINAL SCENARIO BY
ALEX JOFFE
DIRECTED BY
HENRI DECOIN

PRODUCERS:
U. G. C.

DISTRIBUTORS:
A. G. D. C.

✸

FOREIGN SALES

UNION GÉNÉRALE D'EXPORTATION ET DE PARTICIPATION

104 CHAMPS ÉLYSÉES
PARIS — BALZAC 56-80

ITALIAN PRODUCTIONS

1949-1950

ITALIAN FILMS WHICH HAVE TRIUMPHED ABROAD:

LADRI DI BICICLETTE (Bicycle Thieves)
Grand Prix (Saint-Michael) for the best film at the Knokke-Le Zoute, Belgium, Film Festival, 1949.
Locarno Festival Prize, 1949, "Oscar" 1950 for the best foreign film shown in America

IN NOME DELLA LEGGE (In the Name of the Law
The Knokke-Le Zoute, Belgium, Film Festival, 1949 Confirmed by the "Cinéma d'Essai", Paris 1950.

MOLTI SOGNI PER LE STRADE (Dreams on the Highways)
"Prix de l'Interprétation Féminine" at the Knokke-Le Zoute, Belgium, Film Festival, 1949.

VIVERE IN PACE (To live in Peace)
Belgian Film Festival, Brussels, 1948.
International Prize awarded by O. C. I. C., Brussels, 1948.

FABIOLA

CIELO SULLA PALUDE (Heaven above the Marshes)
International Prize awarded by O. C I. C., Venice, 1949;
Prize awarded by the "Biennale" of Venice, 1949, for the best Italian film.

E' PRIMAVERA (Spring)

NOTABLE SUCCESSES OF CO-PRODUCTION:

THE BEAUTY OF THE DEVIL ..... [René Clair]
BEYOND THE GATES ..... [René Clément]
"Prix international de la mise en scène" at the Cannes Festival 1949.
"Prix de l'Interprétation Féminine" at the Cannes Festival, 1949.
PRIMA COMUNIONE ..... [A. Blasetti]
BOTTA E RIPOSTA ..... [Mario Soldati]

INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTIONS OF THE ITALIAN CINEMA:

OTHELLO ..... [Orson Welles]
DOMANI E TROPPO TARDI *(Innocent Youth)* .. [Léonide Moguy]
DONNE NELL'OMBRA *(Women in the Shadows)*.... [Géza Radvany]
GLI INDESIDERABILI *(The Undesirable)* ..... [Géza Radvany]
MIA FIGLIA JOY *(My daughter Joy)* ..... [Gregory Ratoff]
THE PASSION ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW [Ernst Marischka]
THE DANCE OF DEATH ..... [Marcel Cravenne]
VOLCANO ..... [William Dieterle]
TALES OF FIVE CITIES ..... [R. Marcellini]
RALPH ..... [Jacopo Comin and Jean Gehret[
TERESA ..... [FredZinnemann,ArthurLœw]
IL LADRO DI VENEZIA *(The Thief of Venice)* .. [John Brahm, Scalera-Wachs Berger]
LA RIVALE DELL' IMPERATRICE *(The Empress's Rival)* ..... [Sidney Salkow, Scalera]
THE BREAD WOMAN ..... [Maurice Cloche, Minerva]
STROMBOLI ..... [Rossellini-Bergman-RKO]

etc.

ITALIAN SELECTION

A FEW FILMS ...

CAMMINO DELLA SPERANZA *(Road of Hope)*, by Pietro Germi (Lux)
CAMPANE A MARTELLO *(The Knell)*, by Luigi Zampa (Lux)
IL CIELO É ROSSO *(Red is the Sky)*, by C. Gora (Acta)
DOMENICA D'AGOSTO *(August Sunday)*, by Luciano Emmer (Colonna)
E' PRIMAVERA *(Spring)*, by Renato Castellani (S. Ghenzi)
CENTE COSI *(Just-so people)*, by F. Cerchio (ICET)
L'IMPERATORE DI CAPRI *(The Emperor of Capri)*, by Luigi Comencini (Lux)
LINEA BIANCA *(Boundary Line)*, by Luigi Zampa (Lux)
IL LUPO DELLA SILA, by Duilio Coletti (Lux)
IL MULINO DEL PO *(The Mill on the Po)*, by Alberto Lattuada (Lux)
NON C'É PACE TRA GLI ULIVI, by Giuseppe de Santis (Lux)
PATTO COL DIAVOLO *(Pact with Satan)*, by Luigi Chiarini (ENIC)
RISO AMARO *(Bitter Rice)*, by Giuseppe de Santis (Lux)

etc.

FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS:

LA TERRA TREMA *(Earthquake)*, by Luchino Visconti (Universalia)
FRANCESCO, GIULLARE DI DIO *(Francis, God's juggler)*,
by Roberto Rossellini (Amato)
MIRACOLO A MILANO *(Miracle in Milan)*, by Vittorio de Sica (PDS-ENIC)
MIRACLES HAPPEN ONLY ONCE, by Yves Allegret (E.G.E.F.Films)

etc.

A. N. I. C. A.
UFFICIO ESTERO
VIA SISTINA 91 — ROME

ANICA publishes an information bulletin in French: «Cinéma italien». Paris address: 44, Avenue des Champs-Elysées, 8e.

AFTER THE MUNDIAL SUCCESS OF

FABIOLA and LA BEAUTÉ DU DIABLE

FRANCO - LONDON - FILM - EXPORT

presents in **1950** a unique program:

LE CHATEAU DE VERRE

after the novel by Vicky BAUM « Sait-on jamais ? »

A film by RENÉ CLÉMENT

WITH

MICHÈLE MORGAN

AND

JEAN MARAIS

*

ATOLL K

WITH

LAUREL and HARDY

AND

the best French and Italien comic actors

A film by LÉO JOANNON

*

M. DUPONT ET LA PREMIÈRE COMMUNION

A film by BLASETTI

WITH

ALDO FABRIZI, GABY MORLAY, LUCIEN BAROUX and JEAN TISSIER

FOR SALE ALL OVER THE WORLD:

FRANCO - LONDON - FILM - EXPORT

114, Champs-Elysées - PARIS - 8e - Tél: ELY. 57-36

Câbles EFELEF Paris

TOUS LES ASPECTS DE LA

Position Chrétienne devant l'Ecran

vous sont révélés par le livre capital

"LES CATHOLIQUES PARLENT DU CINEMA"

BASÉ SUR LES RAPPORTS ET LES DÉBATS DU

IVe CONGRÈS CATHOLIQUE INTERNATIONAL DU CINÉMA

ORGANISÉ PAR L'OCIC A BRUXELLES

DU 16 AU 22 JUIN 1947

UN VOLUME DE 400 PAGES IN 8°, AVEC ILLUSTRATIONS **105** FR. BELGES

LES ÉDITIONS UNIVERSITAIRES, 163, RUE DU TRONE, BRUXELLES

VENICE BIENNALE

XI MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA

Venice 1950

3 - 6 JUNE

Presentation of Art Documentaries on the occasion of the inauguration of the 25th Biennale of Figurative Art.

8 - 10 AUGUST

International Exhibition of Scientific Films and Art Documentaries.

2nd International Festival of Children's Films.

20 AUGUST - 10 SEPTEMBER

11th International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art.

First exhibition of the international film market.

Individual exhibitions arranged by Greta Garbo, King Vidor and Marcel Carné.

International Book and Cinema Press Exhibition.

6 - 10 SEPTEMBER

2nd International Festival of Haute Couture and Costume in cinematography.

10 SEPTEMBRE

Awarding of prizes of the 11th International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art.

Awarding of the Selznick prize for the best European film shown in the United States.

Anouncement of the prizewinner in the International Competition for the best fllm subject.

DURING THE 11th EXHIBITION :

International Congress of Film Producers.

International Congress of Scenarists.

Congress of Distributors and Film Agents.

Full particulars may be obtained from the Directorate of the Eleventh International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art, Ca' Giustinian, Venice, Telephone: 28-110, or from the Rome Offices: Via Veneto 56. Telephone: 489-171.

BENJAMINO GIGLI refused a number of proposals from film producers until a subject likely to interest him was submitted to him :

TAXI DI NOTTE (Night Taxi)

aroused his enthusiasm by its originality and dynamic character. In this film, he will be able to lay before the public not only his talent as a singer, but also convincing proof of his lesser known gifts as an actor.

THE MOST ORIGINAL AND THE GREATEST MUSICAL FILM OF THE 1950-1951 SEASON

DIRECTOR :

CARMINE GALLONE

Co-producer : LIVIO PAVANELLI :-: :-: :-: GALLONE PRODUCTIONS, via Lucullo 11, ROME

THE EXTRAORDINARY SHORT FILM:

ANNEE SAINTE A ROME

(HOLY YEAR IN ROME)

all over the world a triumphant success

(Distribution France and "Union Française": Pathé Consortium Cinéma, 16, rue Francoeur, Paris 18e)

PARIS :
65, rue Galilée (8e)
Ely. 50-82 (5 lign. groupées)

PRODUCED BY
TELE-PRODUCTIONS
Ltd.

NEW YORK office :
40 West 96th Street
N. Y. U. S. A.

ANALYTICAL INDEX

1949

Presentation: I/1.

Message by His Eminence Cardinal Suhard: II/1.

The influence of films, by the Most Rev. T. D. Roberts, S. J.: III/1. — Catholics and the film industry, by Mgr J. B. Montini: IV/1. — Appeal of the O. C. I. C. to the Directors of the film industry: IV/2. — A «star» at Unesco: Myrna Loy, by A. R.: IV/3.

OUR PLACE IN INTERNATIONAL LIFE.

The cinema as moral and cultural educator, by Louis Marin: I/2. — A cinema worthy of Christian civilisation, by Roger Millot: I/3. — The Vatican among the pioneers of the film, by Piero Regnoli: I/4. — The United Nations appreciate the importance of the cinema, by J. Benoît-Lévy: I/6. — The UNESCO film programme, by Ernest Borneman: I/7. — The cinema in the frame of western civilisation, by Paul Van Zeeland: II/2. — UNESCO's programme for 1949, by Ernest Borneman: II/3. — The resolutions of C. I. D. A. L. C., by Nicolaï Pillat: II/6.

THE CINEMA: FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS.

The films and a Christian order, by Douglas Woodruff: III/2. — Can film save humanity?, by Andrew Buchanan: III/3. — The philosophy of beauty in film, by Hilary J. Carpenter, O. P.: III/4. — Towards new uses for films, by Vittorino Veronese: IV/4. — Is the cinema fair to the novelist?, by Christianna Brand: IV/5. — The director-scenario writer controversy: Italian experience in a world problem, by F. A. Morlion, O. P.: IV/7. — Faith and religious films, by Luigi Gedda: IV/11. — Commercialism versus spiritual values in the catholic cinema, by Marcello Vazio: IV/12.

IN SEARCH OF A CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF THE FILM.

Less potent than fire but more powerful than the printing-press!, by G. Damas: I/10. — The thomist philosophy turns to the cinema, by Felix Morlion, O. P.: I/11. — «Catholics talk about film», by A. R.: I/14. — Realism and Irrealism in the cinema, by Leo Lunders, P. O.: II/8. — The quarrel of the intellectuals with regard to the cinema, by Michel de Saint-Pierre: II/13. — Wretchedness, slavery and greatness in film criticism, by André Bazin: II/17. — Ought one to film the lives of saints?, by Pierre Leprohon: II/21. — Criticism, formalism and morality, by J. P. Chartier: II/23.

THE SCREEN BEARS WITNESS.

The faith and the film, by Robert Speaight: III/7. — Potentialities and limitation of the cinema as a means of religious expression, by D. Wilfred Upson, O. S. B.: III/9. — Religion and the screen, by Declan Flynn, O. F. M.: III/10. — The tragedy of the life of Christ, by Charles Ford: III/12. — Max Jacob and Christ on the screen, by J. M.: III/14.

CONSCIENCE AND THE MAKER OF FILMS.

A shaper of morals who is unaware of his power: the distributor, by Jules Desurmont: III/15. — Conscience and aesthetic freedom, by John Boulting: III/16. — The trail of the sing, by Campbell Dixon: III/17.

CHILDREN AND THE CINEMA.

Essential elements of a capital problem, by Claude Macke: I/53. — Youth and the cinema in France, by Claude Macke: II/69. — The ciné-club at school, by Henri Agel: II/70. — The progress of children's films in England, by Mary Field: III/48. — Children's films in Italy, by Gaetano Carancini: IV/41. — Cinema, grown-ups and children, by Sonika BO: IV/42. — Filmology and child psychology, by Enrico Fulchignoni : IV/38.

INSTRUCTIONAL FILMS.

The film in American education, by Floyde E. Brooker: I/47. — An experiment in teaching by film, by Pierre Faure, S. J.: I/50. — Our children and our films, by Ch. W. H. FENN: II/66. — School films in Luxemburg, by M. Franziskus: II/67. — Catholics and films in England, by J. A. V. BURKE: III/49. — Catholic Teachers' visual education guild, by J. J. Bateman III/52.

NEW METHODS.

The future of sub-standard films, by Remo Branca: I/54. — The continuous projection, by L. R.: I/55. — The Pope speaks through television, by J. P. Chartier: III/19. — The Church and television, by Rev. Pichard, O. P.: III/20. — The French amateur cine world, by Pierre Boyer: III/23. — Television's giant's strides, by Nerin E. Gun: IV/44. — Something new in motion-picture cameras, by A. P. Richard: IV/46.

TOWARDS NEW METHODS OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC EXPRESSION.

Cinema calligraphy: the animated cartoon, by LO DUCA: II/40. — From La Fontaine to Pinocchio, by Robert Couffignal: II/46. — Animated diagrams, by Pierre Michaut: II/48. — Towards the film in relief: a Dutch invention, by J. F.: II/51.

ROUND THE WORLD OF FILM.

Latin America.

The plot: Main weakness of the Argentine films, by Jaime Potenze: I/29. — The cinema in Brazil, by J. Fr. Coelho: I/31. — The Venice Festival, by Johanès: I/33.

United States.

Hollywood crisis seen by our special correspondents: Towards a new sense of moral responsibility, by Th. M. Pryor: I/16. — Hollywood turns its head, by W. H. Mooring: I/19. — Aims of the Legion of Decency, by Mrs. J. F. Looram: I/21. — A great picture: Joan of Arc: How it was produced, by P. Doncoeur, S. J.: I/24. — How it was welcomed, by W. H. Mooring: I/25. — Orson Welles, immaterialist, a profile, by J. de Bongnie: I/27.

French film professionals talk to us.

The sense of responsibility, by Michel Fourré-Cormeray: II/27. — The free film, by M. l'Herbier: II/27. — «. . . .and circenses», by J.-G. Auriol: II/29. — Independence, by Maurice Cloche: II/31. — Thanks for having understood me, by Pierre Fresnay: II/33. — «The divine tragedy», by Abel Gance: II/33. — About the film Dr. Laënnec, by P. Blanchar: II/34. — When I was the curé d'Ars, by G. Rollin: II/35. — French pioneers of a catholic cinema, by J. Morienval: II/37.

Great Britain.

George Pearson: pioneer and prophet, by E. Garrick: III/25. — Scott of the Antarctic, by G. Conway: III/26. — Foreign films in England, by Ivo Jarosy: III/28. — Catholic students and the world of film, by J. A.V. Burke: III/30. — British films, by C. A. Lejeune: III/31.

The italian cinema talks to us.

The progress of the Italian cinema, by Eitel Monaco: IV/14. — Is the Italian cinema neo-realist?, by Turi Vasile: IV/15. — A great film: Heaven on the Marshes: How I made the film of Maria Goretti, by Aug. Genina: IV/17. — One critic's opinion of «Cielo sulla Palude», by G.-L. Rondi: IV/18. — «The true spirit of a part; that is what matters», declares Massimo Girotti, by L. D.: IV/19. — The technical equipment of the Italian cinema, by Piero Regnoli: IV/19. — Film literature in Italy, by Mario Verdone: IV/21. — A few scandals of the Italian cinema, by Diego Fabbri: IV/22. — The Italian documentary today, by M. V.: IV/12. — Film and religious instruction, by A. Galletto: IV/25. — An Italian association of catholic exhibitors, by Ugo Sciascia: IV/26.

THE 1949 FESTIVALS.

Knokke-Venice-Cannes, by A. Ruszkowski: IV/28. — Are film festivals necessary? the future of the Venice Biennale, by Count Elio Zorzi: IV/29. — A new kind of festival needed, by J. de Bongnie: IV/33. — Notes on the international festival of experimental and poetic films (Knokke), by LO DUCA: IV/34. — Decisions of the international jury of O. C. I. C. (Venice) .... IV/36. — The first international children's film festival (Venice), by G. C. Pradella: IV/36.

WORLD PANORAMA.

Argentine: I/36 — III/33 — IV/48; Belgium: I/36 — II/53 — III/34—IV/49; Belgian Congo; IV/49; Canada: IV/50. — Chili: I/37 — II/53; Colombia: II/54; Denmark: I/38—III/35 — IV/50; Egypt: IV/51; France: I/38—II/58 — III/36 — IV/52; Germany: IV/53; Great Britain: I/39 — II/59 — III/37 — IV/54; Holland: I/41 — II/64 — III/39 — IV/56; India: I/42; Italy: I/42 — II/61 — III/41; Luxemburg: I/43 — II/63; Paraguay: II/63; Poland: III/46; Portugal: I/44; Spain: II/56 — IV/56; Switzerland: I/45 — II/65 — III/44; United States: III/42 — IV/58; Uruguay: I/46 — III/44 — IV/60.

CATHOLIC ENTERPRISES.

I/56-61 — Swiss Catholic Centre (Dr. Charles Reinert) — General council meeting of the OCIC in Venice (Y. H.) — Pastoral Letter from the Uruguayan hierarchy (R. O. V.) — Catholic Film Society, Great Britain (J. A. V. Burke) — Renewal of catholic film action in Germany (Dr. A. Kochs) — The cinema enters the Paris Catholic Institute (a. r.) — A Catholic Film Institute in the Netherlands (J. P. Gribling) — Rev. P. Doncoeur, Chaplain of the Union Catholique du Cinéma (a. r.) — Abel Gance works on the "Divine Tragedy" (r.) — A film on vocation (rî) — The C. I. N. E. group in Argentine (j. p.) — In memoriam Rev. Fath. Danion.

II/72-77 — A new christian movement in Hollywood (W. H. Mooring) — The Holy Father's address — The Pontifical Commission for Religious and Doctrinal Films — OCIC pays homage to the Holy Father — "Joan of Arc" is presented at the Vatican — Good and cheap films (Charles Verheye) — The Paulist fathers in Japan — Union of catholic propagandists in Brazil — "Ciné-Forums", a new experience (L. L.) — The efforts of a small island: Malta (S. Laspina) — Egyptian initiative (Y. H.) — The international cinema technicians' Holy Year pilgrimage — OCIC galas — Meeting of OCIC executive committee.

III/54-58 — Religious film festival at Vienna (G. Gerster) — Ten commandments for a catholic film actionary — Memorial service to Canon Brohée — The Holy Year and the cinema — News from Latin America — "Joan of Arc" receives the Christophers' award — The American Legion of Decency and the cinema industry — "The Vatican of Pope Pius XII" available in 16mm — Contacts between officials of OCIC and the Latin America bishops — Activities among French catholics.

IV/61-64 — Meeting of general committee of OCIC in London — Award of the OCIC prize — Film courses in Paris and Lyon — German ciné-clubs study the Christian view-point — An English film on Fatima — An Italian film about the Holy Shroud of Turin — The Pope speaks to you — The Vice-President of OCIC in Buenos-Aires — Head of Legion of Decency concludes 20% of the U. S. A. production objectionable — American bishops stress ban on "Beyond the Forest" — Haïti — Introduction to the cinema in schools — The "Christophers" are to produce films — Religious filmstrips for grade schools announced in the U. S. A. — The mass televised every Sunday — New departures at Luxemburg.

ECHOES.

I/61 — Parliament discusses cinema at Montevideo (R. O. V.) — Religious films and the Rank organisation (A. J. V. B.).

II/77-78 — New success for "Monsieur Vincent" — Cardinal Mindszenty trial to be filmed — The progress of filmology in Italy — Film festivals 1949 — English enquiry on children and cinema — Canadian short films — A propos of "Casse-Pieds" — Mr. J. I. Breen makes a correction.

III/58-60 — Study conference on childhood and the cinema in Paris — United Nations film production — Francis Bolen at U. N. E. S. C. O. — C. I. D. A. L. C. changes its name — International congress of documentary films at Hamburg — The festival season has begun — Death of Francesco Pasinetti — First Christian study of the film in Sweden — Danish authorities encourage films of worth — Future plans of Carl Th. Dreyer — Shooting at Montevideo — The film in Africa — Disney in Europe.

IV/65-67 — Protestant film activities in America — The cinema and UNESCO — Congress of the "Association internationale du cinéma scientifique" in Brussels — Intervention by the President of OCIC — European success of "Joan of Arc" — A production code in Japan — Proposed films on the Church's activity in Uruguay — Cinema propaganda in the United States and France — If you are interested in the religious life of the "Stars" — Norman Mc Laren at the service of visual education in China — Cardinal Mindszenty on the screen — Regulation of the non-commercial cinema in France — 20th anniversary of "Encyclopaedia Britannica Films."

BOOKS—ARTICLES—REVIEWS.

I/62-64; II/78-82; III/60-64; IV/67-71.

INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW

To be issued shortly
Nº 6 devoted mostly to the
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

* * *

STATEMENTS
by
Eric Johnston
President, Motion Picture Association of America, Inc.
Walt Disney
World's greatest poet of the cartoons

* * *

ARTICLES
by
Darryl F. Zanuck
Vice-president, production chief, 20th Century Fox-Film Corp.
Robert Florey
Film director, oldest member of the French Colony at Hollywood
Martin Quigley
President, Quigley Publishing Co.
Martin Quigley Jr.
Editor, «Motion Picture Herald»
Thomas M. Pryor
Film columnist, «New York Times»
William H. Mooring
Motion-picture editor, «The Tidings», Los Angeles
Jerry Cotter, Freda Bruce-Lockhart etc.

* * *

INTERVIEWS AND REPORTS

American stars in Europe
The Fatima picture, by John A. V. Burke
With the makers of cartoon pictures, by Charles Ford
The Congress-Pilgrimage of the Holy Year

* * *

WORLD PANORAMA, NEWS, BOOKS AND PERIODICALS
and,
to prepare the forthcoming International Exhibition in Venice,
a study by *Pierre Michaut:* «The ART FILM»

* * *

MAIN TOPICS OF FUTURE ISSUES :

Number 7
MOTION PICTURES IN THE IBERO-AMERICAN COUNTRIES
Number 8
THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY

* * *

To know what is happening in Movieland —
SUBSCRIBE TO OUR REVIEW !